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THE

# SAFETY OF APPEARING

AT THE

# DAY OF JUDGMENT,

IN THE

# *Righteouſneſs of Chriſt.*

OPENED AND APPLIED.

By SOLOMON STODDARD,
*Paſtor of the Church in Northampton,* Mass.

Phil. iii. 9.—Yea, doubtleſs, and I do count all things but loſs, for the excellency of the knowledge of Chriſt Jeſus my Lord, for whom I have ſuffered the loſs of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Chriſt, & be found in him, not having mine own righteouſneſs, which is of the law; but that which is through the faith of Chriſt, the rightcouſneſs which is of God by faith.

*NORTHAMPTON,*
Printed by THOMAS M. POMROY,
*For S. & E. BUTLER.*

1804.

TO

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

IN

*NORTHAMPTON.*

A MAIN part of the work which the Lord Jeſus has committed to me at preſent, is, to be doing ſervice to your ſouls, and the ſouls of your children; to be directing, quickening, and encouraging of you in the way unto eternal life: Which work requires the utmoſt care and dilligence, not only in reſpect of the neceſſity that you ſtand in of that bleſſedneſs which is the deſign and tendency thereof; but alſo, in reſpect of that difficulty that you will unavoidably meet withal, in your purſuit of that bleſſedneſs. However, many men that know not their own hearts, and are utterly unexperienced in the way of life, may fancy it to be a matter of eaſe to go to heaven, as if there were but a ſtep between them and heaven, and, upon that account, are bold

to

to caſt off all care about it at preſent ; yet, ſuch as have tried it, and are walking in that way, can upon plentiful experience, witneſs to what Chriſt has taught us, *That ſtrait is the gate, and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life ;* every thing in corrupt nature is oppoſite to it : and, upon this account, he requires miniſters to uſe their utmoſt induſtry in their work ; Luke xiv. 23. *Compel them to come in.*

I have travailed in this work among you for many years, and I may ſay, without oſtentation, that I *have obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful :* I have made it my buſineſs to gain ſouls to Chriſt, and build them up in faith and holineſs ; principally inſiſting upon ſuch things as have reached the heart of religion ; and I reckon it one of the choiceſt mercies of the Lord towards me, that I have *not run in vain, nor laboured in vain :* I have great cauſe to bow my knee to the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and bleſs his name, that he has made me an inſtrument of bringing many among you into ſaving acquaintance with himſelf ; and I count it worth the while to ſpend the reſidue of my days in promoting the welfare of your ſouls.

It is in purſuance of this deſign, that this ſmall treatiſe is publiſhed ; (not that my care is confined to yourſelves, I owe a regard to the proſperity of other places.) The ſcope of this diſcourſe is to clear up the way of ſalvation by Chriſt ; I meddle not

with

with thoſe falſe doctrines that have been invented by men, in oppoſition to this truth: the Lord hath been pleaſed to keep theſe churches ſound in the faith, and does not yet lay a neceſſity upon his miniſters here, to ſpend their time in the confutation of ſuch erroneous opinions: but I have made it my work to eſtabliſh your hearts in this truth, to ſatisfy your conſciences from the ſcripture in the ſafety of your reliance upon Chriſt, vindicating the ſame from thoſe ſecret workings of unbelief that are wont to riſe up in the hearts of men, that you and others may grow up *unto all the riches of the full aſſurance of underſtanding, and the acknowledgement of the myſteries of God, even of the* Father, *and of* Chriſt: that you may be armed againſt thoſe temptations wherewith your faith is wont to be aſſaulted; and learn to live in all conditions upon the righteouſneſs of Chriſt.

If the Lord pleaſe to bleſs this diſcourſe, together with other endeavours of his ſervants in the country, both in preaching and writing, to be a means to bring many ſouls to an hearty cloſing with Jeſus Chriſt, that will be the great ſecurity of the country againſt that degeneracy that is begun, and againſt thoſe ſuperſtitious practices that are entertained in other profeſſing places: the life of religion takes beginning in the ſpiritual knowledge of Chriſt, and is maintained by the ſame: as long as we are built upon this rock, the gates of hell will not prevail againſt us.

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The Lord, who has watched over you in the time of days when you lay open to the fury of the Heathen; and that has given ſpecial tokens of his preſence with you in his ordinances, both in the days of your former paſtor, and alſo in late times; continue to own and bleſs you, and enrich you with all the graces of his ſpirit; and give you faith to ſit under the ſhadow of Chriſt with great delight: Which is the prayer of him who is

*Your Servant for* JESUS *ſake,*

SOLOMON STODDARD.

# PREFACE.

IT is thought proper to give a ſhort account of the following Treatiſe and its Author, neither being much known in Britain.

Mr STODDARD was paſtor about 60 years of a church at Northampton, New-England, where he died, 1729, in the 86th year of his age. His ſermons were ſearching and experimental, yet rational and argumentative; and often peculiarly ſuited for awakening the ſecure, directing in the great work of Salvation, and aſſiſting the doubtful in judging their ſpiritual ſtate. Thrice in the courſe of his miniſtry, there were remarkable ſeaſons of general religious concern, and of numerous converſions among his people. It is no wonder that one ſo diligent and ſucceſsful in the work of the Lord, was highly eſteemed and beloved by a church, moſt of whoſe members had been brought up under his miniſtry. Though his ſtation was in a remote corner of New-England, his ſtrength of genius, depth of judgment, acuteneſs in reaſoning, and knowledge of divinity, were ſo uncommon, that, in difficult caſes, his advice was much ſought and valued, and his influence great through the whole of that country.

By

By his diſtinguiſhed talents and high reputation, he proſelyted many to an opinion, oppoſite to the general ſentiments at that time, and, as his grandſon Preſident Edwards has ſhown, oppoſite alſo to Scripture, viz. That ſome who ſuſpect, or known themſelves unconverted, may, notwithſtanding, lawfully partake of the Lord's Supper. Dr Increaſe Mather and others, who juſtly diſapproved and oppoſed that notion, with a laudable candor and impartiality, admired and recommended his practical writings. His moſt valuable work. *The Safety of Appearing in the Righteouſneſs of Chriſt*, thrice in a ſhort time printed at Boſton,* was never, till now, publiſhed in Britain.

It examines not learned, critical, or philoſophical objections againſt the doctrine of Imputed Righteouſneſs; but, in a plain and practical ſtrain, opens the grounds and encouragements of faith, reſolves the doubts of a jealous and unbelieving heart, and unfolds the ſubtile workings of a ſelf-righteous ſpirit. In theſe views, it is the beſt treatiſe I know on the ſubject; though thoſe will think otherwiſe, who reliſh the beauties of language and compoſition, more than they regard the importance and juſtneſs of the ſentiments.

I agree with ſome of my worthy brethren, of different denominations, that there are inaccurate expreſſions,

* *I know not the date of the firſt edition. The ſecond, from which this is printed, was* 1729; *the third* 1742.

preſſions, eſpecially Ch. 5. & 7. as to faith being the condition of the covenant and our evangelical righteouſneſs. But, becauſe the Sun hath dark ſpots, ſhall I deſpiſe its light? Shall I refuſe intereſting inſtruction, becauſe a teacher only knows in part and propheſies in part? I will not make a man an offender for a word, though I may diſlike the word, and wiſh he had not uſed it. The general tendency of the book is to ſhew, that our claim to the pardon of ſin, and acceptance with God is not founded on any thing wrought in us, or acted by us, but only on the righteouſneſs of Chriſt. The author therefore means not thoſe ambiguous expreſſions in the dangerous ſenſe in which ſome have uſed them: and the book contains a ſalutary antidote againſt the poiſon which theſe expreſſions have ſometimes conveyed. If it is aſked, why I did not alter or expunge theſe obnoxious expreſſions? I reply, Becauſe I had no right to do it; and ſuch freedoms with dead authors, appear to me preſumptuous and unjuſt.

May the divine bleſſing render this treatiſe as uſeful in Scotland, as it has been in America! May the thoughtleſs be brought to a ſerious inquiry, wherewithal ſhall I appear before the Lord, and preſent myſelf before the Moſt High God! And may the true anſwer to this queſtion be received as a faithful ſaying, and worthy of all acceptation!

JOHN ERSKINE.

*Edinburgh, June* 11, 1792.

THE

# SAFETY OF APPEARING

IN THE

# *RIGHTEOUSNESS OF JESUS CHRIST.*

## CHAP. I.

### *The Introduction, shewing the Difficulty of Believing this Truth.*

THERE is such light remaining in the conscience of fallen man, as has made him inquisitive after a way of *acceptance with God*: and though several particular persons do not ordinarily concern themselves about it; yet in all nations and ages there have been those that have made it matter of *solemn search*. The abundant evidence that men have of the being, purity, justice and greatness of God, in conjunction with the testimony of their own hearts concerning their *guilt*, has made them restless till they can come at some *satisfaction* in this point. Men have been studious in many other points, from a thirst after knowledge, and to gratify their curiosity; but in this enquiry they have been much influenced by the cries and disquietness of their own burdened consciences. The fearful apprehensions of God's anger have spurred them on to discover a way of reconciliation: they have not been able so to stupify their hearts with worldly occasions and carnal delights, as to let fall the

consideration of this, but have been compelled from their own terrors to make that inquiry, as they, Mic. vi. 6, 7. "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord," &c.

Many men who have busied themselves in this enquiry, have not been advantaged to attain a right resolution thereof. The *Heathen nations* had lost the knowledge of the way of salvation: something in religion was handed down to them by tradition; and something particularly that had a reference unto Jesus Christ; especially sacrifices: but the knowledge of the respect they had to him, was yet quite worn out among them, and the light of nature is utterly deficient in this particular: that light is sufficient to discover to us that God is provoked with us, that knowledge flows from our understanding of the nature of God, and the experience which we have of our own sinfulness: but the way of reconciliation does exceed the discovery of reason: the light of nature does not teach us that there is any way of reconciliation; much less does it teach us what it is: the light of nature may discover to us, that many pretended ways of acceptance are delusions; for it is contrary unto reason to imagine that God will take up with such things: but to determine what is the way, is clearly beyond the most raised understanding of man, without divine revelation: upon a supposition that there was a possibility of any other way of acceptance for sinners besides this by Jesus Christ (and I know no ground from Scripture to say that God was confined to this way; that he was necessitated, if he would save sinful man, to take this course in order to his salvation) it will unvoidably follow, that the light of nature will leave man short of this knowledge:

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how can the light of nature reach the free determination of the will of God? But besides this, the knowledge of the way of our acceptance with God through Christ, does necessarily suppose the knowledge of those two great mysteries; that of the holy Trinity, and that of the incarnation of the Son of God, which do utterly surpass all the dictates of the light of nature: "Flesh and blood reveal not those things, but the Father that is in heaven," Mat. xvi. 17. Hence the *Gentiles* were utterly mistaken as to this way of reconciliation; and, as Paul speaks, "became vain in their imaginations."

But besides these, there are *many others*, who have been advantaged with the light of the gospel, that have beed unsatisfied in that account which the Scriptures have given concerning the way of our acceptance, and have *pleaded for such methods of salvation* as the *word of God is utterly a stranger to*; withal wresting many passages of scripture to vindicate their own delusions. Thus as the *Jews* of old, so especially the *Papists and Socinians* now, go about to establish a righteousness which the gospel does not acknowledge; and fix upon a way of acceptance with God, that has no better foundation than their own sophistical reasonings. This is not to be attributed to any obscurity in the Scripture, in the matter of our justification; but greatly to the *pride* that men have in their own understandings. Carnal reason suggests that other ways are more probable than that which is commended to us by God: carnal reason is full of objections against the doctrine of our acceptance by Christ's righteousness; and men know not how to deny their own reason; they do not carry a sense upon their hearts of

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the imperfections and deceits of their own reason ; they know not what dim-sighted things they are : carnal reason is a thing much idolized : many men have not learned that lesson, to be satisfied in the testimony of God, but make their understanding the rule and measure of principles in religion ; lay so much weight upon their own reason, that they judge things must be so as their reason represents them, loath to entertain any thing in matters of faith, that they do not see with their own eyes : partly, to the *enmity* of the hearts of men unto this way of acceptance by Christ : this way of salvation is very suitable to our necessities, but no wise suitable to our natural disposition : man's heart would sooner fall in with such a way of salvation, wherein he might have somewhat of *his own to glory in.* This way tends much to the exalting of God, and abasing and emptying of man : the spirit of man is to set up *his own righteousness,* and not be beholden unto the righteousness of another ; which makes men unwilling to believe this doctrine of our acceptance by Christ : and this opposition of the heart hereto, prepares men to receive the contrary doctrine. Arguments that have little strength in them will take great impression upon men of corrupt minds ; where there is strength of affections, plausible pretences will gain consent ; slender proofs will serve the turn where men's spirits are strongly biassed.

But it were well if none else did reject this doctrine, but only those *that do professedly plead against it* : there be multitudes that do join in making this confession, that are far from entertaining it : how high soever men's professions be, there are, no more that do thoroughly believe

this

this, than are *regenerated and effectually called*: there is a kind of persuasion of it which carnal men may have, which persuasion the Scripture sometimes calls faith; but it is such a persuasion as leaves men really ignorant of this truth: some men have a persuasion of it wrought by *tradition*, because it is handed down to them from former generations, and generally received in the places where they live; or by those that they have a particular esteem for: upon the same account that a *Turk* gives credit unto the principles of his religion: Jer. ii. 11. The doctrine is received upon the *authority and testimony of man*, which leaves the soul under such uncertainty, as quite obstructs the spiritual efficacy of the truth upon their hearts. There is a persuasion that arises from *rational convictions*: their reason tells them that other ways of acceptance are frivolous; that of all ways that are pretended, this must needs be the true way: and they can strongly argue that there is acceptance to be obtained in this way, from the accomplishment of the covenant of works by Christ, from the design of God to magnify his grace, &c.; but this persuasion is not sufficient to encourage a soul to venture himself on Jesus Christ. There is also a persuasion that ariseth from *common illumination*: besides that light which is let into the hearts of men in their conversion, there is a more than ordinary illumination bestowed on some sinners; the Spirit of God gives an affecting sight of the way of salvation, enlightening natural conscience with a great discovery of the way of life by Jesus Christ: this is called "a tasting of the good word of God," Heb. vi. 5.; the fruit whereof is a rejoicing in the Gospel, Mat. xiii. 20. This illumination is

only by an extraordinary assistance of men's natural reason, not by giving an eye of faith unto them: neither is this light sufficient to satisfy all the objections which may afterwards arise in the heart: hence such men, if afterwards they have a thorough sight of their hearts, dare not venture their souls on Christ, till God, by a further work of the Spirit, has convinced them of the certainty of the gospel: but there is no man, how great soever his profession, how large soever his knowledge is, that continues in a natural condition, does thoroughly believe this truth.

This I shall clear up by two considerations.

1. *Because all those that do thoroughly believe this, will immediately venture themselves upon Christ: As there is no persuading of men before to come to Christ, so there can be no keeping of them from Christ after they are convinced of this.* The assurance of the truth of the *gospel* is ever accompanied with a powerful operation of it upon the heart, 1 Thes. i. 5. God teacheth men this truth of the *gospel,* and thereby prevails with them to come to Christ: in that way it is the Father puts forth his drawing power, John vi. 44, 45. The *gospel* always works effectually where it is believed and received as the truth *of God,* 1 Thes. ii. 13. God carries on all his works upon the hearts of his elect in a way of *conviction:* The devil's way of working is by blinding of man, by prejudice and false reasons; but God's way of working is by teaching of men: Thus God carries on *preparatory* work, and thus he carries on *saving* work. God deals with men as with *rational creatures,* and prevails upon their hearts in a way suitable to those natures, though he put forth acts

of

of power yet not *of violence* on the will; but he gains the consent of that, by the discovering of those reasons that are of sufficient weight to sway it: indeed, the understanding and will in man being faculties of the same soul, and really one and the same thing, the same act of God upon the soul that puts light into the understanding, does also suitably incline the will: God works all holy inclinations in the will by convincing us, and making us, believe those truths that are the grounds of them; we believe and love, believe and repent, believe and fear, believe and submit, believe and so venture on Christ: God convinces us of the truth of the gospel, and that there is sufficient righteousness for us in Christ, and so we come to him, John xvi. 10. And therefore all those that are assured of the truth of the gospel, do close with Christ, and are regenerated: and this leads us to the interpretation of several passages of Scripture, where such men as assent to the doctrine of the gospel are said to be in a good condition. Rom. x. 9. "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe with thine heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved:" 1 John iv. 15. "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he is in God:" 1 John v. 1. "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God:" 1 John v. 4. "Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" These passages are not to be understood of that faith which is common to professors; that faith may be separated from holiness, which *James* calls a dead faith, Jam. ii. *ult.* but of that assurance that is wrought in the heart by the Holy Ghost.

A *second* thing that clears it, is, That *when natural men fall under the awakening work of the spirit, they immediately call the gospel, and in particular this truth, of the safety of our appearing in Christ's righteousness, into question.* Though they might seem before to themselves and others well satisfied; yet whenever they come to lie under the sense of God's anger, and conscience is writing bitter things against them, they are full of scruples and objections against the gospel: it is a long time usually before such persons can give entertainment to this truth; and when it is done, it is wrought in them *by the mighty power of God*: all that ministers can urge upon them will not take place; the choicest evidences will not sink into them till God opens their hearts, as he opened the heart of *Lydia*; sometimes the hearts of such men will be *objecting* against this way in *general*, as if there were not salvation for sinners in this way; they scruple how the righteousness of one will avail for the salvation of another, &c. but principally their scruples are *respecting themselves in particular*: they are not satisfied that God calls them; that there is enough in Jesus Christ for the washing away of their sins; that God would take it well for them to venture themselves on Christ: they think they must be better first, and more broken for their sins. This is directly contrary to the doctrine of the gospel; for the gospel does not only teach in general, that there is salvation in Christ for sinners, but that it is safe for any that will, be they never so blind, hard-hearted, impenitent and rebellious, and guilty, to venture themselves on the righteousness of Christ: men do not only oppose the gospel, when they question whether believers shall be

saved,

saved, but when they question whether there be sufficient encouragement for them to come to Christ.

There are two sorts of natural men that are pretenders, not only to the belief of the truth of the gospel, but also to trusting in Jesus Christ, which upon examination will be found to deceive themselves: *one* sort are, *many unwakened sinners,* some of whom are not so much as civilized, nor of moral conversation; yet they profess to place their trust in Jesus Christ: such as those the apostle *James* expostulates with, Jam. ii. 14. *ad finem:* but whatever such men say concerning their putting their trust in Christ, the real foundation of this hope is an ignorance that they have offended God. They may please themselves sometimes with the general notion that Christ has wrought out redemption for sinners; and make a little use of Christ's dying for sinners to quiet their hearts; but the bottom of their confidence lies in this, that they are strangers to the provoked justice of God; they do not think that God is angry for their sins; they live a life of carnal security, Psal. L. 21, 55. & xi. 9. The *other* sort are *self-righteous* sinners, who say they put their confidence in Christ; but their great encouragement is, that they have attained somewhat that does draw the heart of God unto them. There are many self-righteous men, that do not profess any trust in their own righteousness: they have been so trained up in the contrary doctrine, that they could not quiet their own hearts, if they knew that they did it: but yet, under a notion of resting upon Christ, they rest upon themselves: their religious qualifications are their main stay: they are far from putting themselves upou a strict trial by the law:

but

but they imagine some excellence in themselves, and that is their encouragement to go to Christ. The *Jews* made account their works would do much toward their salvation; the grace of God making up the defects thereof, Rom. ix. 32.; so do *those* trust *partly* to their *works, partly* to *Christ,* making a mixture of the law and gospel: and *both these sorts* of men, notwithstanding their pretences, are strangers to the safety of appearing in Christ's righteousness.

And as *natural* men do not truly believe this doctrine; so *saints* themselves have but little belief of it: the people of God may justly fall under that reproof, Luke xxiv. 25. "Fools and slow of heart to believe." There are times when God is pleased abundantly to assure the souls of his people of this truth, 1 Thes. i. 5. the fruit whereof is a sweet and quiet resting upon Jesus Christ: but the natural unbelief of the heart is darkening that light which God has put in; and though it cannot utterly extinguish it, yet it raises many mists that do obscure it. *Paul* himself, that seems to be second to none in the knowledge of Christ, intimates that he was sensible of a great want here, in that expression, "that I may know him and the power of his resurrection," Phil. iii. 10.

There are *these frames of heart* that the people of God are subject unto, that do plainly demonstrate, that there is but little faith concerning this doctrine.

The *first* is a *slightly frame* concerning it, as if it were not a matter of much moment whether it were true or no: Sometimes when saints are meditating of it, or hearing of it, and the invitations of grace, there is a senseless and

regardless

regardless frame, as if it were not worthy of observation: discourses of that kind are not relished, but become light food; whereas if it were received by a lively faith, it would be affecting, being a thing of greatest concernment: the doctrine of the gospel when entertained by faith, is as a cordial to the soul, it is meat and drink to it. Cant. ii. 3. "I sat under his shadow with great delight." This doctrine is full of sweetness and comfort. 1 Pet. i. 9, 16. Acts i. 34. The more assurance men have of the truth of it, the more comforting power it has on the heart.

The *second* is a *self-righteous frame*; for as this spirit reigns in many natural men, so it prevails much in saints: there is a great aptitude to be comforting of themselves in the hopes of acceptance with God from their own graces and duties, not only as an evidence, but as that which does ingratiate them with God; hence they are more ready to trust in God when under the sense of gracious frames, and their holy carriages, than at other times; whereas, were they under the lively apprehensions of the certainty of this way of salvation by Christ's righteousness, they would see there was no need of these things to commend them to God. And were there not secret jealousies about the sufficiency of Christ's righteousness for them, they would not be so ready t. catch at any appearance of somewhat in themselves to commend them to God; such carriages are to be laid to the charge of an unbelieving heart.

The *third* is a *discouraged frame*; Christians are many times much over-borne with this frame, their *spirits are sunk*

*sunk within them,* lest they be not upright, for fear they never had a thorough work of regeneration: there are many more immediate occasions of this; sometimes because they have not a distinct knowledge of the several steps of the spirit of God under the work; sometimes because they see so little sanctification; sometimes because they imagine that God does not deal with them as with such as are truly converted; he does not answer their prayers, comfort their souls, meet them in ordinances as he does others: but the very foundation and root of their discouragement is their *doubtings* of the truth of the gospel; for we may observe that men under discouragement are still harping upon the greatness of their provocations, and their unworthy carriages: they run in a legal strain; they are still insisting on the multitude and aggravations of their sins. Had men but a spirit of faith prevailing in them, these would be *humbling* things, but not *discouraging:* men would not so harp on this thing, but would see enough in Christ to quiet their hearts, Psal. lxxi. 16, 45. Isaiah xxiv. And accordingly it is observable that when a saint is under greatest discouragements, if God does but open his eyes to see indeed this way of salvation by Christ, he will no longer stand insisting upon his fears, but, with comfort and joy, cast himself on Christ: the inward discoveries of the gospel make his temptations vanish; yea, he does not only rejoice in Christ, but can sometimes discern that sincerity which he was so doubtful of before. Indeed the doubting of the gospel does not only make the hearts of men fail, when they are faithful of sincerity, but it has often also a considerable influence into those doubtings about sincerity, and hinders men from seeing those evidences that are discernible, of their uprightness

rightness. By all which it does appear, that it is a matter of solemn care, that *sinners* be *convinced and assured* of the truth of this doctrine, that it is safe appearing in the righteousness of Christ; and that *saints* also be *further convinced,* that they may grow up "to all the riches of the full assurance of understanding to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, even of the Father and of Christ;" as the apostle speaks, Col. ii. 2. which is the design of this present *Treatise.*

## CHAP. II.

### TWO THINGS PREMISED,

1. *The possibility of the Salvation of sinners; it is not beyond God's Mercy, nor contrary to his justice.*

2. *What is intended by the Righteousness of Christ.*

TO make the way to the subject proposed more plain, I shall *premise* two things.

1. *That there is a possibility of the salvation of sinners.* For a sinner, when his conscience is awakened, lies open to that temptation among others, that it is *impossible for such an one as he to be saved:* and these fears arise upon a *double account.*

The (1.) is, *he fears it is beyond the mercy of God to pardon him*: his sins are so great, that they have turned

away the heart of God from him, that God cannot find in his heart to pity and pardon such a sinner as he is. Man is very prone to limit the mercy of God, and entertain low and dishonorable thoughts of his grace, especially when under a sense of his anger : but such an imagination as this is altogether groundless. What his merciful purposes are towards this or that particular man, is beyond us to determine, till he make it known : but no man has cause to question the sufficiency of God's mercy, in order to his pardon and salvation. There is an infinite ocean of mercy in his heart, sufficient for all sinners.

To clear up this, I shall shew first, *Wherein the merciful nature of God does consist*, and then shew you *the greatness of it*.

For the first ; *The merciful nature of God, is a divine perfection, whereby he can find in his heart to shew mercy if he pleases.* A merciful nature in man, is a bent and inclination of heart unto the exercises of mercy ; the heart of a man is biassed, set and bent that way : but we must not conceive this of God. The merciful purposes of God were the *free actings* of his own will. God was an absolute free agent, either to bestow mercy or deny it as he pleased : if he had naturally an inclination to shew mercy, he could not have forborn to shew mercy without going contrary to the inclination of his own heart. The exercise of mercy does not flow necessarily from the merciful nature of God ; but he exercises grace freely from his sovereign will and pleasure : there is nothing in God's nature that does compel him to shew mercy to any man ; God had been infinite in

mercy

mercy, if it had pleased him never to exercise any : there are voluntary inclinations in God to exercise mercy, but no natural inclinations : but his merciful nature is that whereby he can find in his heart to exercise mercy ; God is not of such a nature as to be incapable of pitying and being kind. There is no opposition in the nature of God unto acts of mercy ; his nature is such, as that he can be willing to shew kindness and do good. The merciful nature of God is a power to be willing to deal graciously with his creatures. God is of such a nature, as that he can be willing to do good to those that are unworthy, willing to pardon those that are guilty, *&c.* and this is called his merciful nature. The words of *Moses* serve to clear up this, Num. xiv, 17. 18. 19. "Let the power of my Lord be great according as thou hast spoken," saying, "the Lord is long suffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin : pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people, according to the greatness of thy mercy."

And the *greatness of God's mercy*, or merciful nature consists in this, *that he can find in his heart to do any thing that is an act of mercy*. His merciful nature reacheth to every thing that is an object of mercy ; there is nothing which it would be an act of grace or mercy to do, be it never such wonderful grace, but God can find in his heart to do it. It is true, he cannot pardon sin in a way contrary unto *justice* ; for that would not be an act of grace, but of injustice : nothing that is an act of grace does exceed the grace of *God* ; and herein lies the greatness of his mercy. The great-

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ness of God's *power* lies in this, that he can do whatever is possible, whatever is an act of power. So the greatness of his *wisdom* lies in this, that it extends itself to every thing that is knowable. The greatness of his *justice* lies in this, that he can find in his heart to do every thing that is an act of justice. So the greatness of his *grace* consists in this, that there is no gracious act, but it falls within the reach of his gracious nature: and herein the grace of God doth exceed the grace of any man or angel. Is it an act of grace to send a Mediator for lost sinners, to bring worthless man to eternal glory, to pardon multitudes of sins, sins against light, love, covenant, to convert all a man's children? These, and whatever else of the like nature may be thought on, fall within the reach of divine mercy; yea, the reason why he does not pardon the *sin against the Holy Ghost*, the sins of devils and reprobates, is not for *want of mercy*, but because of the sovereign determinations of his own will: Rom. ix. 15.

That God is thus great in mercy, may be made manifest from these *two considerations*.

First, *That there is no corruption in God to make him incapable of performing any act of grace.* Men cannot find in their hearts sometimes to do acts of mercy, because their lusts are too strong for them; they will not suffer them; their corruptions bear such sway, that they cannot be willing. Sometimes men's covetousness is such, that they cannot shew acts of mercy; so it was with *Nabal*, 1 Sam. xxv. Sometimes pride and passion so prevail, that they cannot forget an injury: they have

a spirit

a spirit of revenge, and cannot satisfy their hearts, without avenging themselves. But God is altogether free from corruption ; there is *no evil disposition* in him to hinder him from doing good, Mat. vii. 11. : he has no evil properties to be an impediment unto him. Men are ill conditioned, which makes them unwilling to do good : but God is of unspotted purity and holiness, Isia. vi. 3. God is not subject to any *wrongful* passions. The scripture does often attribute *anger* unto him, but that must be understood so as is agreeable unto the nature of God. Whatever injuries God receives, he never is transported with passion : He can overlook millions of offences ; his grace is such as can prevail over all our guilt. Hence his *grace* is said *to reign ;* it overcomes all those objections that are in the way of the exercise of it, Rom. v. 21. There is nothing of any *unruly* passions in God, 1 John iv. 8. God is not subject to envy : he can find in his heart to advance his creatures unto eternal felicity : he does not scorn or disdain, that dust and ashes should have fellowship with him. God is not of such a spirit, that he cannot bear that man should be happy, but he can delight to make him so, Mic. vii. 18.

By this, we have gained one step ; namely, *that the grace of God does exceed the grace that is in sinful man.* Which may be of advantage to us ; for there is that vanity in the heart, that we are prone to measure the mercy of God by our own, and to allow him no more grace than we find in ourselves, and others like ourselves : which God witnessed against, when he tells us, "That his thoughts are not as our thoughts," Isai. lv. 8.

But there is a further consideration that will make it appear, that the grace of God does exceed the grace of the most glorious angel in heaven, which is,

2. *The unlimited perfection of God's nature.* The *angels* have a stinted measure of perfection: the excelling of their nature is not sufficient in order to some acts of grace: as in other respects, they are not sufficient, so they have not grace enough to pardon such wrongs as God pardons; to be at such cost for man's salvation, as God has been at. It is true that they do approve of and rejoice in all those acts of grace that God does; but such actions do exceed the grace that is in their hearts: they have such imperfection of grace and mercy, that they cannot perform those acts of mercy that God does: therefore, where God would shew his sufficiency to pardon the iniquities of his people, he tells them, that he is *God*, Hos. xi. 6. This infiniteness of God's grace is the foundation of our faith, for such things as we are utterly unworthy of: Psal. 36. 7. "How excellent is thy loving kindness, O Lord! therefore the son's of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings." There is an infinite ocean of grace in the heart of God, whereby he can bestow the greatest gifts upon his creatures, that their natures are capable of. This is plain from that absolute liberty which the scripture does ascribe unto God in all his actions. "He does all things after the counsel of his own will," Eph. i. 11. "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy," Rom. ix. 15. Which shews there is no limitedness in his perfections, to be any restraint unto him; or a reason why he does not pardon and save these and those. His glorious excellency is such, that no

unworthiness

unworthiness nor provocation can overcome his mercy: but there is a sufficiency of grace in him, for any thing that is an act of mercy.

A (2.) thing that makes awakened sinners fear that there is an impossibility of their salvation, is, *an apprehension that it is contrary to the justice of God, and not reconcileable with the sentence of the law.* God stands bound in faithfulness to see the law made good: and they are to seek about the consistency of the law and gospel; the clearing up of which difficulty, I shall refer unto the *next chapter.* At present it may suffice to say, that God in his word declares it to be consistent with his justice, Rom. iii. 26. "That he may be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." It is a great help unto conscience, to see how the justice of *God*, and righteousness of the law, is preserved in the justification of sinners: but where the manner of it is not well understood, conscience has matter of satisfaction, in that *God* testifies that it is so.

2. The *second* thing to be *premised* is, *What we are to understand by the righteousness of Christ.* And that which is intended hereby, is *the whole course of the obedience and sufferings of Jesus Christ.* By the righteousness of Christ, we are to understand that which he performed as a surety: His *mediatorly righteousness.* This righteousness is spoken of, John xvi. 10. "Of righteousness, because I go to my father." Rom. v. 18. "By the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all, to the justification of life." Dan. iv. 24. "To bring in everlasting righteousness." Upon this account it is, that

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he is said to be "made for righteousness to us," 1 Cor. i. 30. To be "the Lord our righteousness," Jer. xxiii. 65. This is sometimes called "the righteousness of God," Rom. x. 3. Rom. iii. 21.; either because Christ who wrought it out for us, is *God* as well as man; or because it is a righteousness of *God's* providing, in distinction from a righteousness of our own working out. Sometimes it is called the "righteousness which is by faith," Heb. xi. 7. because faith is the condition whereby we come to be interested in it. Sometimes they are joined together: and it is called "the righteousness of God which is by faith," Rom. iii. 22. Phil. iii. 9.

That this righteousness of Christ doth not only intend his *active obedience,* but likewise *his sufferings,* is manifest from hence, because the righteousness of Christ is that whereby we are justified: it is by that that we come to be righteous in the sight of God, Rom. v. 18. And not only the active obedience of Christ has an influence into our justification, but his sufferings also: The apostle does once seem to attribute it to his obedience, Rom. v. 19. "By the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." But this does not exclude the sufferings of Christ from having a part in our justification. *Obedience* may comprehend his *sufferings,* for in them he was obedient; or else, when it is said, that by "his obedience we are made righteous," that part of justification may be understood, which does consist in giving a title unto heaven. There are two parts of justification; *one* is *absolution from guilt,* the *other* is *declaring men heirs of life.* This latter may be intended, which is the fruit of the active obedience of Jesus Christ; or else by obedience, as one

principal

principal part of Christ's righteousness, the whole may be intended: as, when we are said to be justified by his blood, his active obedience is not excluded; but the sufferings of Christ have an influence into our justification, as well as his obedience; for we were in such a state, that active obedience alone was not sufficient for our justification. When man was in innocency, he needed only active obedience for his justification; but man fallen, needed more for his justification than obedience; he needed *satisfaction*, somewhat to pacify the provoked anger of God: no mere obedience would make a recompence for sins; for the *law threatened death* for them. The holy life of Christ could not satisfy for sin; it was something of another kind that the law required; namely the sufferings of death: and the Scripture doth abundantly witness unto the influence of Christ's sufferings into our justification: we are "justified by his blood," Rom. v. 4. So we are said to be redeemed, cleansed from sin, reconciled to God, to have our sins purged with his blood, which was typified by the sacrifice under the law; so that the *sufferings* of Christ are intended, as well as his active obedience, by his righteousness.

And the *sufferings* of Jesus Christ may very properly be called *a part of his righteousness; partly, because in them he did fulfil the command of God, and that duty that lay upon him as our surety.* That was one of the things he undertook as our Mediator, to "redeem us from the curse, being made a curse for us." As it was his duty to fulfil the precepts of the law for us, so likewise to bear the *penalty of the law*; if he had failed in that, he had not answered his office obligations. He stood bound

to

to God to undergo the punishment of our sins; God expected that from him, "to make his soul an offering for sin," Isa. liii. 10. And he was under a command to lay down his life: as the second Person in the Trinity, he was equal to the Father; but, as Mediator, he was commanded by him, John x. 18. "I lay it down of myself; I have power to lay it down, and power to take it again; and this commandment have I received of my father." Jesus Christ fulfilled the law of the Mediator in his sufferings; and therefore he is said "to be obedient unto death, the death of the cross," Phil. ii. 8. The same is implied in that expression, "He learned obedience by the things that he suffered," Heb. v. 8. The meaning is not, that he learned to obey, but he learned by the sufferings what a difficult thing obedience was: it was a part of his obedience to suffer, and so may be called his righteousness: and so indeed there is righteousness in those sufferings of the saints, which, in a way of holiness, they do expose themselves unto. And those sufferings of Christ may be called his righteousness; partly because by them he became *legally righteous*: the sins of the elect were imputed unto him, and he was legally guilty. He stood bound to answer for the sins of his people; and accordingly was apprehended by the justice of God, and the punishment of the law inflicted upon him, by bearing of which he has paid the debt, and the law has no more power over him. By his sufferings, he is become righteous in law, and discharged from any more sufferings forever: having suffered the punishment of our sins, the law has acquitted him, has nothing at all to object against him; he has answered the law, and is now reputed

legally

legally righteous. Hence it is, that presently upon his suffering, he is said to be justified; "justified in his spirit," 1 Tim. xiii. 16. that is, by his resurrection unto life. By his sufferings he has delivered himself from that guilt that lay upon him; and is become in the eye of the law righteous.

## CHAP. III.

### The proposition, *That it is a safe thing to appear in the Righteousness of CHRIST.*

### Arg. I. *Because CHRIST's Righteousness is the Rightcousness of the Law.*

THE *subject* of the present discourse is, *That it is a safe thing to appear in the day of judgment in the rightcousness of Christ.* It is safe to go before the judgment-seat of God, having no other righteousness to plead for our justification, but Christ's righteousness: this righteousness is sufficient, and will prevail for the salvation of all those that have an interest in it: we may with quietness depend upon it, as that which will serve our turn: there is no other righteousness that can be come at, that it is safe appearing in. Our own personal righteousness is many ways defective, and incapable of being the *matter* of our *justification.* That righteousness that is performed by the saints is acceptable unto God; but it cannot procure the acceptance of their persons; the acceptance of

*itself*

*itself* is procured by Christ; "sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ," 1 Pet. ii. 5. But we may justly venture ourselves upon the righteousness of Christ: other foundations will prove sandy, but the righteousness of Christ is a firm foundation for faith; and therefore it was *Paul's* great care that he might "be found not in his own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ," Phil. iii. 9.

The truth of which PROPOSITION, I shall demonstrate by the following Arguments.

Arg. I. *The righteousness of Christ is the righteousness that the law required of us: it answers the demand that the law makes of us, and therefore it is safe appearing in it.*

There is a necessity of our having the righteousness of the law: God has stated the law to be a *rule* of his proceeding towards man, wherein he has set down the terms upon which he will bestow life and execute death: in that covenant, he gave not only a law unto man, but likewise to himself, from which he will never swerve. And it is utterly vain for any man to expect acceptance with God, without that righteousness which the law requires, until the law be answered, man can lay no claim to blessedness; neither can God in fathfulness bestow blessedness upon man. God has bound himself to see the law fulfilled to a tittle: this law cannot be abrogated nor disannulled. Saints indeed are not under the condemning power of it; because it has been fulfilled for them: but yet the law stands in force as *a rule*, according to which God will distribute eternal rewards. Matt. v. 19.

19. " One jot, or one tittle of the law shall in nowise pass, till all be fulfilled." Man may break the law, but God will fulfil it ; the law is never out of date, and as it cannot be abrogated, so neither can it be moderated. God will never take up with less satisfaction than the law admits of, nor with a less perfect obedience than the law requires : God does, under the gospel, accept of imperfect obedience, but not for *justification*. There can be no varying from the utmost and highest demands of the law : the law is inflexible, and must be exactly attended : it abates nothing : so that a regular conscience can never give peace until the law be fully answered : the law gives sin a condemning power, 1 Cor. xv. 56. " The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law :" therefore the law must be answered

And it is sufficient for us if we have the righteousness of the law ; there is no danger of our miscarrying, if we have that righteousness. The security of the angels in heaven is, that they have the righteousness of the law : and that is a sufficient security for us if we have the righteousness of the law. If we have the righteousness of the law, then we are not liable to the curse of the law, we are not threatened by the law ; justice is not provoked with us : the condemnation of the law can take no hold upon us ; the law has nothing to object against our salvation : that soul that has the righteousness of the law, is out of the reach of the threatnings of the law ; where the demand of the law is answered, the law finds no fault ; the law curses only for want of perfect obedience, Gal. iii 10. Yea moreover where there is the righteousness of the law, God has bound himself to give eter-

nal life ; such persons are heirs of life, according to the promise of the *law:* the law declares them heirs of life : Gal. iii. 12. "The man that doth them, shall live in them."

Now, *that the righteousness of Christ is that righteousness which the law requireth of us,* is clearly held out in the word of God, Rom. viii. 4. where the apostle sets down the end of God's "sending his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemning sin in the flesh;" which is, that the "righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us." The meaning of it must needs be, that we might be made righteous by the imputation of Christ's righteousness : This righteousness is said to be fulfilled in us, inasmuch as we have fulfilled it in our surety. So Rom. x. 4. "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." The end of giving *Moses* his law was to drive us to Christ, in whom alone we have righteousness of the law. This is also clearly held out in all such Scriptures where Christ is said to be our righteousness, and that we be made righteous by his obedience : for righteousness, consists in answering the demands of the law. It is only that righteousness that the law demands of us, that can denominate us legally righteous: if Christ's righteousness were not that which the law requires of us, we could not be accepted as righteous upon that account ; and the scripture speaks particularly of Christ's sufferings, that they were those which the law required of us, Gal. iii. 8. "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us:" that curse that he redeemed us from, is *that* he endured ; and that was the *curse of the law.*

And

And indeed herein lies the excellency of Christ's righteousness, whereby it is a foundation of so much comfort and support unto saints, that it is that righteousness that the law requires of us: this is that consideration from which conscience does take satisfaction.

But there lies one great *objection* against this, that the apostle *Paul* seems to make an opposition between the righteousness of the law, and the risghteousness of faith, and between justification by the law, and justification by grace, and by faith, and by the promise: "So a man is not justified by the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ," Gal. ii. 6. "Received ye the spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith," Gal. iii. 2. "The law is not of faith," Gal. ii. 12. "If the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise," Gal. iii. 5, 18. "If there had been given a law, that could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law," Gal. iii. 21. "That I may be found in him, not having mine own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ: the righteousness which is of God by faith," Phil. iii. 9. "By the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight; but now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested," Rom. iii. 20, 21. "We conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law," Rom. iii. 28. "If they that are of the law be heirs, faith is made void," Rom. iv. 14. "If by grace, it is no more of works," Rom. xi. 6. By these places, it seems there is no need of having the righteousness of the law in order to our justification.

The *resolution* of this doubt does depend upon the

right

right understanding of what is *meant by the law*, and by the *works of the law*. By the *law* he intends a *mere covenant of works*, abstracted from that gracious way of accomplishing of it, which God has revealed in the gospel; and thus the law is utterly incapable of justifying of us, "it is weak through the flesh," Rom. viii. 3. And the way of life by the law, is distinguished from that way by faith; for though the covenant of works leaves room for salvation by Christ, and does no way forbid such a way of salvation, yet it provides no Mediator for fallen man; yea, is utterly silent as to a Mediator for him; leaves sinful man in a perishing condition; denouncing the curse against him; shews him no way of salvation; tells him not of any possibility of salvation. The covenant of works made no provision for salvation, but it gave way to man's salvation, in case the righteousness of it were fulfilled by a surety; so that the way of life by the law and by the gospel, are *divers ways* but not *opposite*; the covenant of grace supposes a covenant of works, and finds out a *new way of fulfilling it*; yet the practice of those who sought justification by the covenant of works alone, was contrary to the doctrine of grace; "whosoever is justified by the law," that is, seeks to be justified or conceits that he is justified by the law, is "fallen from grace," Gal. iv. 5. The law and gospel are placed by God in a glorious subordination one to the other; but men, by seeking to be justified by the covenant of works alone, do set one in opposition to the other.

By the *works of the law* the apostle understands, such works as men themselves do perform in conformity to the law: This is evident, because he calls them "his own righteousness,

righteousness which is of the law," Phil. iii. 9. And these works are utterly incapable of justifying us: Tho' Christ's works, according to the law, are the matter of our justification, Rom. v. 19.; but our personal conformity to the law, being attended with so much imperfection cannot justify us: We must seek our justification by the righteousness that the law requires, but not by our own works according to the law. *Israel* is not blamed *for seeking after righteousness,* that is, the righteousness of the law; but because they sought it "as it were by the works of the law," Rom. ix. 31, 32.

For the fuller clearing up of this truth, that Christ has performed the righteousness that the law required of us, whereupon the satisfaction of our consciences does so much depend; I shall briefly speak to these particulars: viz.

1. *What is the Covenant of Works.*

2. *What difference is there between the Covenant of Works, and the Covenant with Adam.*

3. *That the Covenant of Works did admit of a Mediator.*

4. *That Jesus Christ is a Mediator.*

5. *Christ's work as Mediator, was not to restore man to his former condition; but to bring him to Salvation.*

6. *That Christ has performed the Righteousness of the Law.*

7. *That he performed the Righteousness of the Law for us.*

8. *That this is sufficient for the Elect of God in all ages.*

9. *That He has so purchased Salvation, that the Elect cannot fail of it.*

The first thing to be considered is,

*What is the Covenant of Works? as it relates to Man.*

I shall not now consider it as the Angels are concerned in it, and I shall give this description of it: The covenant of works is, *an everlasting rule of righteousness, wherein God requires perfect obedience as the condition of life, and forbids all disobedience on pain of death.* The explication of this may be taken up in these propositions.

Prop. I. The *covenant of works is not an agreement between God and man, but a rule of righteousness between them.* Sometimes the word *covenant* is taken for a *promise* without condition, Gen. ix. 11. but frequently for a *law* with *promises and threatenings.* Persons indeed are not taken into the covenant of Grace without their actual consent; but this is not necessary in other covenants, as in the covenant that God makes with the infant seed of his people, Deut. v. 3, 29. Deut. xv. The children of God's people are born under this covenant, that is, under that law with such sanctions: so in the covenant of works there is no need that man should consent. *Adam* did not give his consent antecedently to the making of the covenant, for he was made under it; and there are millions of men that never gave any consent unto it, yet stand as firmly bound by it as if they did. God being

infinitely

infinitely man's superior, and having a legislative power over him, might make him under such a covenant without asking his consent. This covenant is nothing else but a *righteous rule,* which God, by his own authority, has constituted between himself and man, according unto which he will distribute rewards and punishments to men. In this covenant God has given law unto himself, marked out a path for himself to walk in. He was at liberty; might, if he had pleased, have forborn to exact punishment for sin; might have annihilated man after a course of perfect obedience; might have chose in some other way to have rewarded his obedience; might have bestowed blessedness on him as an obsolute free gift without any condition at all: but in this covenant he has bound up himself, and laid down a rule according to which he will proceed.

Prop. II. The *covenant of works is an everlasting rule of rigteousness between God and man.* This is a rule that God never will vary from: it is not proper to say that the covenant of works is abrogated; it is very true that the condemning power of it respecting believers is taken away, but that is by *the fulfilling of the law,* not abrogating of it: the covenant of works does yet continue in its full force; it takes place against the sins of ungodly men, being executed to the full upon them, Mat. v. 18. It has taken place against the sins of the Elect, upon Jesus Christ: the curse having been executed upon him, Gal. iii. 13. "He hath redeemed us from the curse, being made a curse for us." And God does bestow eternal life upon none, but those who have fulfilled the righteousness of the law in their surety: eternal life is given as a recompence of Christ's righteousness, Rom. v. 21.

Prop. III.

Prop. III. This *covenant of works could not be known by our first parents any other way than by divine revelation:* Because both the promises and threatenings of this covenant depended on the free will of God; so that whatever abilities of understanding *Adam* had in his first estate, they were insufficient to make a discovery of them. The precepts of the law were written in the heart of man when he was first made, and so they are still, though not so legibly. Rom. ii. 15. "They shew the works of the law written in their hearts." And this I do not understand to be any distinct work of God from that of creating the soul; for the *precepts* of the law, excepting that one of the *sabbath*, have *a self-evidencing power*. So that supposing man to have an understanding, he cannot but have some knowledge of them; and supposing him to have an understanding not corrupted, he cannot but have a clear knowledge of them. But the promises and threatenings of the law are not understood by any thing written in man's heart. Conscience indeed, by its own natural light, does give evidence, that sin is offensive to God, and so affrights men with expectation of wrath: but it cannot witness the *certainty of judgments*, much less of *eternal condemnation*, except it had received some further light either from the *works* or *word* of God.

Prop. IV. The *covenant of works does require obedience, only as the condition of life*. There are several other obligations upon us unto obedience, some antecedent to the covenant of works; as, the infinite excellency of God, the work of creation: Some of them consequent; as, the dying love of Christ, God's giving converting grace, and many the like: but the covenant

of

of works requires it only as a condition of life. And hence, though the covenant of works be fulfilled for us by Jesus Christ, so that there is no engagement on us to perfect obedience, as it is a condition of life; yet those antecedent obligations do remain upon us, and we owe obedience still as a natural due, Psal. xcv. 6. That primitive obligation, *as we are creatures*, will lie upon us forever, besides those other obligations that God has laid upon us since.

Prop. V. The *covenant of works requires perfect, but not personal obedience.* The obedience required in the covenant of works, is *perfect* for one transgression lays man open to the curse, but it does not stand upon *personal* obedience. But this is upon another account, and not by virtue of the covenant of works. The covenant of works never tied us up to personal obedience as the condition of life. God has been so far from binding us up to *personal* obedience as the condition of life, that he *never did* propose that way unto us; but, from the beginning of the world, constituted a *public person* to act in *our behalf*; and, upon his failing, immediately revealed Jesus Christ, to be *another public person* to act for us, Rom. v. 19.

Prop. VI. The *life promised in the covenant of works, is a life of glory in heaven.* The promise is life. Gal. iii. 22. "The man that doth them, shall live in them." Some have thought, that *Adam* should have had only the continuance of that blessedness which he was created in, if he had kept the covenant. It is very true, that there is no mention in the covenant of his going to heav-

en; but we have clear ground to conclude from Scripture, that if man had stood, he should have gone to heaven, according to this promise.

1. Because *hell, where the devils are, is the reward of disobedience, by the covenant of works; therefore heaven, where the holy angels are, is the reward of obedience.* It is meet the rewards should be proportionable. I know it is answered, that sin deserves evil at God's hands; but holiness, which is due unto God, does not deserve any rewards. But this does not take off the force of the argument; for it is by the law that sin merits, as well as holiness; and hence wicked men are punished only for such sins as they commit in this life, 2 Cor. v. 10. And there is as much goodness in holiness as evil in sin; and it is a meet thing that God should bestow as much good in a way of obedience, as he inflicts evil in a way of disobedience. Besides, the law expresses the punishment of sin by death, Rom. vi. 23. "The wages of sin is death:" And the reward of obedience by life, Gal. iii. 12. "The man that doth them, shall live by them:" therefore it is a *life* directly *opposite* to that *death*, a life that contains as *much good* in it, as that death doth *evil*. Those terms do mutually explain one the other.

2. Because *Christ in fulfilling of the law for us, has purchased life for us in heaven:* Christ has purchased heaven for us. Eph. i. 14. it is called *a purchased possession*. And he did it by performing the law for us; it is by making of us righteous, that we come to have a title unto eternal life. Rom. v. 21. "Grace reigns by righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord."

3. Because

3. Because Christ tells the young man in the gospel, (that enquired of him what good thing he should do that he might have eternal life), "that if he would enter into life he should keep the commandments," Mat. xix. 16, 17. Where we may mind, that the life enquired after by the young man, was a *life in heaven*; and that Christ in this answer is leading of him to the *covenant of works*, upon a design to convince him of his inability to keep it.

4. Because the apostle *Paul* gives that as the reason, that men cannot be justified by the law, "because they are sinners," Rom. viii. 3. & iii. 20. The *Legalists* that *Paul* disputes against, expected *eternal life* in heaven *by their works*; yet in all his disputes with them, he *never tells them*, that the *covenant of works does not promise any such thing*. If he could have told them so, that would clearly have cut off all their hopes: but he still shews, that they cannot have salvation by the law upon this account, because they cannot fulfil it; yea he plainly implies, that the reward by the law and gospel are the same, but the way of obtaining it is different. Rom. iv. 4. "He that worketh has the reward by debt; he that worketh not, hath it by grace."

The *second* thing that falls under consideration here is,

*What is the difference between the covenant of works and the covenant with* Adam?

God's *covenant with Adam* is generally confounded with the *covenant of works*, to the great hinderance of our understanding of God's dealings with mankind. *Ad-*

*am*

*am* indeed was made, as well as we, under a covenant of works, under a covenant of life, upon condition of perfect obedience. But besides this, there was a *particular covenant* with *Adam*, whereby he was constituted a legal head or representative of his posterity, to act in our behalf, to stand or fall for us, as well as himself. This is plainly held forth, in that he is said to be "the figure of him that is to come," that is, of Christ, Rom. v. 14. He was the *figure* of Christ, inasmuch as he was made a *public person*, as Christ also was: this also is evident, because we sinned in him; his fall is truly ours, Rom. v. 12. Which could not have been, if we had not been in him as our representative; because God had constituted him our head, therefore his sin became ours, Rom. v. 19. 1 Cor. xv. 22.

There is a *great difference* between these two covenants: there might have been a covenant of works, though there never had been any such covenant with *Adam* constituting him a public person: that was accidental to the covenant of works. God made a *covenant of works* with the *angels*, but he never appointed them any *public person* to act for them; but every one stood singly for himself. We make a great difference between them in these three particulars,

1. The *covenant with Adam proposed a particular way for the accomplishment of the covenant of works.* The covenant of works states the condition of life; but God, by making *Adam* a public person, finds out a way for the fulfilling of this condition. God has proposed two ways for the accomplishing of the covenant of works:

*First*

*First*, By making a covenant with *Adam*, to perform obedience for his posterity : this way failed.

The *second* was, By *making a covenant of redemption with Jesus Christ*, wherein Christ undertook to fulfil the covenant of works for us : this I call the second way, because, though this covenant was made first, yet it was revealed last, as not to take place, until the covenant with *Adam* was violated.

2. The *covenant with Adam has never been fulfilled, but the covenant of works has.* *Adam* utterly failed of performing that particular covenant made with him. If that covenant had been fulfilled, all mankind had been happy ; whereas they were all exposed to misery by him, Rom. v. 12. But the covenant of works has been fulfilled ; Christ fulfilled it, Mat. iii. 15. And we in him, Rom. viii. 4.

3. By *virtue of Adam's covenant, we are only liable to punishment for that sin which we committed in him.* For that covenant only laid duty on him, as he was to act jointly for himself and on us ; and that covenant was at an end on his eating the forbidden fruit. But by the covenant of works we are liable to punishment for our personal sins : that covenant threatens death for any transgression, Gal. iii. 10.

A *third* thing to be considered is, *That the covenant of works did admit of a Mediator.*

It will be readily granted, that though the evil of sin be incomparably great, yet it is not so great but that

God may have compassion upon us, and find in his heart to provide a Mediator for us. His infinite mercy may move him to give us a Redeemer, though sin so greatly provokes him. The great *question* is, Whether he has not so bound himself by his law, as to take away all possibility of help by a Mediator? *Whether the law will give way to the interposture of a Mediator?* Whether the word of God does not bind him to punish the sinner in his own person? If so, it is a vain thing to expect any help from a Mediator, for no violence may be done unto the law. And the words of the curse have such a force, as if they did devote the sinner unto personal ruin: "In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die," Gen. ii. 17. But we must distinguish between such threatenings as are legal, and such as are personal. Some threatenings are *personal*, and infallibly to be fulfilled upon those that are threatened: thus the threatenings of eternal destruction against impenitent sinners, must unavoidably take place on them. But there are some threatenings which are *legal*, and intend no more, but that the offender must die legally; that is, be punished with death, either in his own person, or the person of his surety, thus many human laws are to be understood, thus it is among men in case of debt; and there is nothing in the words of the law that does contradict this interpretation. The *words* do enforce no more than this. The words of the law are not any ways strained by putting this sense upon them; neither is there any thing in the *case*, of itself, to oppose this interpretation; for the sufferings of a surety answer the end of the law, as well as the sufferings of the offenders.

God's

God's *name is as much vindicated,* and there is as full a testimony given to the holiness of God by the sufferings of a surety, as if the sinner had suffered in his own person. There is no probabiiity that *Adam* did at first understand this interpretation of the curse; it was a secret that God kept in his own breast, until there was occasion for its publication. Indeed, from the first publishing of the law, God shewed that a *public person* might perform the preceptive part of it for others; and, by failing therein might expose others with himself unto ruin, as *Adam* did. Which shews it also to be very fair, that a *public person* may suffer for us. If a public person may ruin us, why may not a public person recover us? But we have no grounds to conclude that *Adam* knew any thing of the possibility of salvation in case he sinned; but God, after the fall, revealed it unto him.

But God has, *by his practice,* clearly given us this interpretation of the curse of the law. God himself has provided a *Mediator* for us, and inflicted the punishment of our sins on him; which shews it is nowise contradictory to his law so to do. Such a proceeding is agreeable to the law, otherwise God would never have had a hand in it. God has shewed us how the law is to be understood in executing it on Jesus Christ; and it is very unreasonable to think, that there should be any thing in the law to hinder our salvation by Jesus Christ; for this way of salvation has been decreed by God before the world. 1 Pet. i. 20. "He was foreordained before the foundation of the world;" and certainly he would never make such a law as should overthrow his decree: the law must be so understood, as not to cross his everlasting purposes

of

of saving sinners by Christ. The apostle argues, that the covenant of grace could not be disannulled by the law of *Moses, which was given four hundred and thirty years after,* Gal. iii. 17. So I may argue, that the everlasting purpose of God to save us by the sufferings of Christ, cannot be disannulled by a law that was made in time; and therefore that law must be so understood, as not to cross that design.

The *fourth* thing to be cleared is, *That Jesus Christ is a Mediator.*

Though the law left room for a Mediator, yet God was at liberty whether he would provide one or no; but he has provided Christ, and put him into this *office.* Christ stands in that relation of a Mediator; and this implies both *duty* and *authority,* to work out all our salvation for us, both as to the purchasing, and also the applying of salvation. That Christ Jesus is a Mediator, is set down in express terms. 1. Tim. ii. 5. "There is one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus." The word *mesites* is peculiar to the holy Scripture. *Socinus* would have it to signify only God's interpreter; and it may be, that may be the meaning. Gal. iii. 19. "It was ordained by angels in the hand of a Mediator." But the word generally notes *one that stands between God and man,* to make up the breach that sin had made. That this is intended in the forementioned place, is evident by the next words, verse 6. "Who gave himself a ransom for all:" so that his mediation consisted in giving himself a ransom; or, at least, he was such a Mediator, as did give himself a ransom. This must also be

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the meaning of the word, Heb. ix. 15. " And for this cause he is the Mediator of the New Testament, that by means of his death for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first Testament, they which are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance." There is plainly held forth, that he executed his Mediatorly office in dying for transgression, and in order to our enjoying an eternal inheritance. The same Mediatorly office of Christ is held forth, 1 Cor. viii. 5, 6. " For though there be that are called Gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be Gods many, and Lords many,) but to us there is but one God the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him, and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him." The Heathens did distinguish between their Gods into celestial and terrestrial : the celestial and sovereign Gods, they thought to be immortal, of a sublime and pure nature ; the terrestrial were the deified souls of famous men deceased, whose office it was to be as mediators and agents between the sovereign Gods and mortal men : these are called *Baalims* or *Lords*. Unto these superior and inferior Gods, he does elegantly allude, verse 6. so that when he says, " that to us there is but one Lord," he means one *Mediator*. The same Mediatorly office of Jesus Christ is held forth in those titles of *Prophet, Priest* and *King*, which are frequently given unto him, and contain under them the several parts of his Mediatorly office.

There are *three things* requisite unto the Mediatorly office of Christ ; the fitness of his person ; the consent of the Father ; and his own consent.

The *first* thing requisite, was *the fitness of his person*, whereby he was capable of discharging this office. It did not become infinite Wisdom to lay such a task on one that was incapable of performing it; and this requisite was found in Jesus Christ. This undertaking was too great for any *mere creature*; but it was not too heavy a burden for the shoulders of Jesus Christ. He was fit to *purchase* our salvation, and also to *apply* it; and, upon this account, he was prized by God. He is said to be *elect and precious*, 1 Pet. ii. 6. As a prince prizes some men, because they are of such abilities, that they are fit to serve him in the greatest offices of the kingdom; so God having a design to save sinners, he prizes Christ as a person fit to bring about that design.

The principal *fitness* of Jesus Christ for the work of Mediator, consists, *in his being God-man in one person*; yet we must not think that he did not enter into his office, till he was actually incarnate; the incarnation was necessary to his full discharge of that work: but he entered into his office, and began to fulfil it *before his incarnation*. Our sins were not actually imputed to him till his incarnation; but he was a Mediator immediately upon the fall of man: from that time his blood was efficacious, Rev. xiii. 8. "He is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world:" from the time of the making of the covenant of grace, he was a Mediator, Heb. xii. 24. And the salvation of the *Patriarchs* in the first ages of the world, was the fruit of the mediation of Christ; and therefore that solemn consecration of Christ, at the time of his baptism, was not unto the office of a Mediator, but the work of his *public ministry*.

Christ

Christ, by *being man,* was fitted as for some other parts of his office, so especially *to fulfil the law for man,* to obey and suffer for us: had he been *only God,* he had been incapable of obedience or sufferings: had he taken upon him the *nature of angels,* he had been incapable of obeying and suffering for us. The *Mosaical* law concerning the right of redemption in the *kinsman,* did typify that Christ should be *our kinsman:* this manifested what God intended; but that doth not prove that there was a necessity of it: but if he had assumed the angelical nature, he could not have fulfilled that law that was given to man. The precepts and curses of the law were fitted to man's nature, and some of them could not be fulfilled by the angelic nature. Besides, the tenor of the covenant of works ran thus: that "man must fulfil the righteousness of the law," and, in case of disobedience, man must "bear the curse of it." This the apostle shews, when he teaches us, "that because we did partake of flesh and blood, Christ also partook of the same, that by death he might deliver us," Heb. ii. 14.; and intimates, verse 16. that if he had taked the nature of angels, it would not have served the turn. And whereas he adds, that he took on him *the seed of Abraham;* we are not to understand that there was any necessity of that, any further than from the promises and prophecies thereof, that he should come of that stock; but he mentions his coming of *Abraham,* as that which evidenced that he was of the *same nature* with *us.*

Christ, by *being God,* was fitted not only for his *prophetical* and *kingly office,* to the execution whereof, divine power and wisdom was requisite, but he was also fitted

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for his *priestly office;* so that the divine nature had an influence into the satisfactoriness of the sufferings of Christ. That is held forth, Heb. ix. 14. "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your consciences from dead works?" And, Acts xx. 28. "To feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."

To complete the fitness of Jesus Christ for the work of a mediator, there were necessary *some special qualifications of the human nature,* especially *holiness and wisdom.* His holiness was necessary unto all his offices: he would not have been fit to have executed his prophetical office, without that. He had need be holy and faithful, that is, to declare the mind of God to man: Without this, he would not have been fit to have executed the office of a king. He that rules the world, and judges men's eternal estate, had need be *holy*: Without this, he would not have been fit to have executed the office of a priest. He that was to work out righteousness for others, and satisfy for their sins, must be holy; and this qualification was perfect and complete in Jesus Christ, Heb. vii. 26. "For such an high-priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners." Here Christ's holiness is set forth possitively, he was holy; and negatively in three branches, he was harmless; free from actual sin, undefiled; that is, free from original pollution: Separate from sinners; free from that common sin of mankind, which they committed in *Adam.* The other qualification of *wisdom,* was especially necessary unto the execution of his prophetical and kingly offices; this he

needed

needed an extraordinary measure of, and God has furnished him suitably, John v. 34. "God giveth not the spirit by measure unto him." By which expression we are not to understand infinite gifts; for the human nature is not capable of an infinite qualification, but extraordinary qualifications, beyond what God does bestow on other men. This was spoken concerning those gifts given him at the time of his *baptism*, when the spirit rested on him; and questionless are far exceeded by those gifts bestowed on him, when he ascended to the right hand of God.

A *second* thing requisite unto the mediatorly office of Christ, *was the consent of the Father*.

There was a necessity of *his approbation*, that the Mediator might have *authority* to discharge his office. There could be no redemption without the consent of him, whose prisoners we are; and although the sufferings of Christ were in their own nature, a *valuable consideration* for our redemption, yet there could not be satisfaction without the consent of God. God might not be imposed on, nor any satisfaction obtruded upon him without his consent. The office of a Mediator, as it implies authority over man, so it implies subjection and subordination to God: and accordingly in this work, Christ is *God's servant*, Isai. xlii. 1. "Behold my servant whom I uphold." And the scripture does give in abundant evidence, that the Father did consent to this undertaking of Christ's. He is called God's Elect, Isai. xlii. 1. "Mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth." He was chosen by God to this work: so he is said to be *foreordained*,

*dained,* 1 Pet. i. 20. Christ did not intrude into this office, but was *called of God,* Heb. v. 5, 6. When he came into the world, he was sent of *God,* John v. 37. He came with a *commission,* and it was under *God's hand and seal,* John vi. 27. God has confirmed Christ in his office by an oath, Psal. cx. 4. "The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek."

The *third* thing requisite to the Mediatorly office of Christ, *was his own consent.*

It was not meet that such an office should be forced upon him; that it should be put upon him to die for sinners, without his own choice; and that if we consider the innocency and excellency of his person. But he did *freely consent* to take this task upon him. His will as he is God, is the same with the Father's: And, *as man,* he closed with it; he voluntarily undertook this work of redeeming and saving sinners. Heb. x. 6. "Then said I, Lo I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God." Gal. ii. 20. "He loved me, and gave himself for me." John x. 18. "No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself."

The consent of the Father and the Son is represented to us in scripture, after the manner of a covenant, called by divines the *covenant of redemption:* In which transaction we may take notice of these *five Articles.*

1. The *Father promised to fit the Son for the work of redemption, by preparing an human nature;* that so he might be capable of working out our redemption, Heb. x. 5. "A body hast thou prepared me." His manifestation in the flesh was *pre-ordained,* 1 Pet. i. 20. 2. The

2. The *Son covenanted to answer the law for us*; that he would suffer for our sins, and work out righteousness for us. Mat. xxii. 28. "The Son of Man came to give his life a ransom for many." John x. 18. "I have power to lay down my life, and power to take it again: this commandment have I received of my Father."

3. The *Father covenanted to accept the obedience and sufferings of Jesus Christ for the elect*; that their debt should be remitted unto them, and they saved thereby. Isai. xlix. 6. "It is a light thing that thou shouldst be my servant, to raise up the tribe of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel; I will also give thee to be a light unto the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation to the end of the earth." Isai. liii. 10, 11, 12. "When he shall make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, &c.

4. The *Father covenanted to invest him with full authority to accomplish the salvation of his redeemed ones, and apply to them the benefits of his death*: and in order unto this, to advance his human nature unto the highest dignity and glory. John xvii. 2. "Thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he may give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him," Eph. i. 22. "He hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the Church."

5. The *Son covenanted fully to accomplish the salvation of all the Elect.* John vi. 39. "This is the will of the Father that sent me, that of all that he hath given me, I should lose nothing, but raise it up again at the last day."

These

These things were agreed to between the Father and the Son.

The fifth *proposition* for the clearing this argument, is, *That Christ's work as Mediator, was not to restore man to his former condition, but to bring him to salvation.* Our primitive estate in *Adam*, was an estate of innocency; we were habitually holy, without any offence, probationers for glory; neither in an estate of condemnation, nor in an estate of justification. And God, if he had so pleased, might have appointed Christ to have restored us to our *primitive condition*; to have set us free from the guilt and power of sin, and so might put us upon it to have wrought for our own blessedness again, according to the *tenor* of the *former covenant*: but Christ was appointed to bring us into an estate of *justification* and *salvation.* Jesus Christ had his authority bestowed upon him to bring us to life. John xvii. 2. "Thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him." Accordingly, Christ has done more for our blessednes than *Adam* was to do. *Adam* was to bring us out of an estate of innocency into an estate of justification: but Christ has brought us out of a guilty estate into an estate of justification. Yea, Christ has done more for our blessedness, than *Adam* did for our ruin. *Adam* brought us from innocency to misery; but Christ has brought us from misery, not back again to innocency, but to blessedness. In this respect, that *salvation* that *Christ* has wrought, is more eminent and remarkable, than that *destruction* that *Adam* wrought. And for the purchasing of this, there was *more required*, than for the restitution

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of us to our primitive condition : The sufferings of Christ were sufficient to procure our restitution unto innocency ; but there was a necessity of the *active obedience* of Jesus Christ, to bring us into an estate of blessedness. Christ's active obedience was necessary for us as well as his passive : and this was one reason, why it was requisite that Christ should continue so long upon earth, that by a *course of obedience* for many years, he might *purchase eternal life for us.* The influence of the blood of Christ into our justification, was typified by the *sacrifices* ; the influence of the active obedience of Christ into our justificaiion, was typified by the *white garments* of the priests, and the *beautiful garments* of the *high-priest.* Our justification is compared to the putting on *of white raiment,* Rev. iii. 18. Some have objected against the necessity of Christ's active obedience to our justification ; that by his sufferings, he satisfied for our sins of omission, as well as of commission : and, if our sins of omission were satisfied for, it is all one as if we had performed the duty. But that is a mistake ; we cannot be justified, except obedience be performed. Gal. iii. 12. " the man that doth them shall live in them." Suffering is the fulfilling of the *threatening,* not of the command : mere suffering has satisfaction, but no merit in it : suffering for sins of omission, only removes the guilt contracted by the omission : suffering for sins of omission, puts us into *such a condition* as if the *duty had not been ommitted,* but not into such a condition as if it *had been performed :* into such a condition as *Adam* was in ; not such as believers are in. In a sin of omission, there are *two things* to be observed ; a neglect of duty towards God, which is to be punished ; and a neglect of the condition of life ; which condition must be attend-

ed to, before life be bestowed. The forgiving an omission may be, where the duty is still expected. If a man fail of paying money at the day, his omission may be forgiven, and yet the money may be expected.

The *sixth* proposition for the clearing of the argument is, *That Jesus Christ has fulfilled the righteousness of the law. He has answered all the demands and challenges of the law: what the law could challenge from us, has been accomplished by, and upon Christ.*

First, *Christ has fulfilled obedience unto the commands of the law.* Jesus Christ lived a life of spotless holiness and integrity, obedient in all things unto the command of God, John xvii. 4. "I have glorified thee on earth, I have finished the work that thou gavest me to do." 1 Pet. ii. 22. "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth." He lived in a perfect and absolute conformity to the law of God all the days of his life; and therefore he is said to *know no sin*, 2 Cor. v. 21. Concerning this active obedience of Christ, I shall here only observe these *two* things:

1. That *he did all the common duties of the law, and such particlar duties as were proper to the relation that he sustained.* He did not sustain all relations, as *husband* and *parent*; and therefore the duties peculiar to such relations, were not required of him, nor performed by him. Neither was their any need that he should stand in all relations, and fulfil the work required of all. Some give that reason, why Christ was in this or that condition, that it was to sanctify those conditions to his people, and, by that reason, he had need have been in all conditions, that the like might be sanctified to his people.

ple. But it was sufficient that Christ fulfilled the whole law, as it was required of one in his station; and that is enough to answer for the Elect, whatever relation or condition they are in.

2. *Christ did obey not only moral commands, but also subjected himself to the commands of instituted worship.* And as he was *circumcised* in his infancy, so when he was adult, he was *baptized*, and gives that reason of it, because "it became him to fulfil all righteousness," Mat. iii. 15. So Christ partook of the *Lord's Supper*, Mat. xxvi. 29. Some think, that the *reason* why Christ was baptized, was, that he might thereby shew his approbation of *John's* baptism. But that might have been done by his word; and I cannot think that Christ would use a significant ceremony, if the signification had not all belonged to him: neither would he perform an act of worship that was not proper for him, only to shew his approbation. Another *reason* that is given, is, that it was to *sanctify our baptism*: but their baptism was sanctified, that were baptized before: besides, it is not the example, but the *institution* of Christ, that sanctifies our baptism. Another *reason*, that he was hereby inaugurated and consecrated to his office. But there is nothing leads to that; he was solemnly consecrated immediately after. This ordinance has no such signification; but the *reason* of it was, because *sin was imputed to him;* and as this ordinance seals up to us deliverance from sin through Christ's blood, so it sealed up to him deliverance from the guilt of sin through his *own blood*. Through the shedding of his *blood* he was justified, 1 Tim. iii. 16. And this was a seal to his faith,

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and sin imputed was *sacramentally* done away hereby: The like may be said of his partaking of the *Lord's* supper.

*Secondly*, Christ Jesus *has likewise borne the penalty of the law.* The death of Jesus Christ was a legal death, it was the execution of the law. The putting of Christ to death, was an act of *vindictive justice*; it was a fruit of the wrath of God: This is evident, because he is said to *be made a curse for us.* The curse is the condemning sentence and execration of the law, Gal. iii 13. This the *apostle* proves from Deut. xxi. 22, 23. That law was a *ceremonial law*, whereby they that were hanged on a tree, were ceremonially accursed, to *typify* the accursed death of Jesus Christ. This typical reason excepted, there is no reason why this sort of death should fasten a curse on a person, more than any other legal death: This law makes the man that was hanged a ceremonial curse, to typify Christ's having the moral curse. Again, it is clear, because God punished Christ with death for sin; and God does not punish sin, but by the law. The death of Christ was on the account of sin, Isai. liii. 6. "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of us all." 1 Cor. xv. 3. "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures."

Several things are here *objected;*

As, 1. *That Christ did not suffer spiritual death in sin, the loss of the image of God; which is a part of the penalty of the law.*

*Ans* 1. Christ *bore the essential parts of the curse, not*

*all*

*all the accidental.* There be many circumstantial parts of the curse, wherein there may be great variety; so one reprobate does not bear all the pains, diseases and afflictions, that others do; some reprobates shall not endure bodily death, as they which are alive at the coming of Christ: So Christ did suffer some sorrows that were peculiar, when indeed there was no absolute necessity of them from the moral law; as he suffered a legal death from men, died as a malefactor, with many aggravating circumstances; there was no need that Christ should suffer the same *in specie* with reprobates; it was sufficient that he suffered the same *in pondere.* The death of the soul in sin, flows not from the curse absolutely considered, but, from the *disposition* of the patient; it is a punishment fit for sinners, but not for a Mediator.

2. Object. *Christ did not suffer the torments of hell, which are a principal part of the curse.*

Ans. *He did not suffer in hell, but he suffered the same for substance with them that are there.* As for the bodily punishments of Christ, they were very great; but he bare the punishment of hell in his soul. He bore the loss of the *comfortable fruition* of God, Mat. xxvii. 46. And he had the doleful sense of the *wrath of God* on his heart. This is held out, Psal. cx. 7. "He shall drink of the brook in the way." And, as we have peace of conscience, through imputed righteousness, so he had torment of conscience from imputed sin. What was it else that he conflicted with in his agony? was it only the fears of *temporal death,* which many martyrs

have borne with triumph ? He grappled with the *wrath of God*, that made him *sweat drops of blood.*

3. Object. *Christ did not suffer eternal death, and the eternity of the punishment is the great aggravation.*

*Ans.* It is true, he suffered but a few years ; and the extremity of his punishment, was but for a few hours ; because *the infinite dignity of his person, made his short sufferings equivalent to the everlasting punishment of the damned.* For an infinite person to suffer a temporal punishment, is as much, as for a finite person to suffer an eternal punishment. It may be as severe justice to punish Christ with the like pains for a few hours, as to punish a damned man with them forever. A less quantity of gold equals a greater quantity of silver. It seems to be as great a testimony of the holiness of God, and a vindication of the honour of his law, to punish his *dear Son* with a *temporal*, as *sinners* with *eternal punishment.*

The *seventh* thing to be considered is, *That Christ performed the righteousness of the law for us : it was performed on our account, that we might be justified thereby.*

1. *The active obedience of Christ was performed upon our account.* Whatever was done that way, was done by him as our Mediator and representative. Rom. v. 14. "By the obedience of one, many are made righteous." And Christ's righteousness, as distinct from his sufferings, is spoken of as a ground of faith, 1 John ii. 1, 2. "We have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, who also is the propitiation for our sins." So in Dan. ix. 24. "The bringing in of everlasting righteousness," is spoken of as a distinct thing from finishing

ishing transgression, and making an end of sin: which are benefits to come by the Messiah. Neither does it anywise prejudice this truth, that Christ owed obedience unto God, as he was man; it being essential to man to owe obedience to his Creator; for *Adam's* obedience was a natural debt, yet, if he had obeyed, all his posterity would have lived. And, though Christ himself were rewarded for his obedience and sufferings, (as is held forth Phil. ii. 7, 8, 9, 10.) that hinders not its usefulness for us. The primary design of it, was to accomplish our salvation; which hinders not but that God might give some signal testimony of his acceptance of the love and service of Christ, by recompensing him for the same.

2. *The sufferings of Jesus Christ were also upon our account.* And indeed there can no other account be given of these sufferings; no other reason but this can be assigned of them. His sufferings were exceeding great, as appears by his being afflicted beforehand about it, by his heaviness and amazement, by his prayers, by his sweating drops of blood; and no satisfactory reason can be given of these sufferings, but only that he bore our curse. It was not for any *personal sin*, for *he had none*, Heb. vii. 26. It was not to *prevent any sin*. God sometimes brings afflictions on his people to prevent their sinning, 2 Cor. xii. 7. But there was no danger of Christ's sinning; his nature was not tainted; and the union of the divine nature with the human was a sufficient security. It was not merely in a *way of trial*, to try the patience and faith of Christ; the scripture gives in no evidence of that. Neither was it principally to

give

give us an *example of patience;* but he suffered, to *make an atonement for us, and reconcile us to God.* The scripture represents the sufferings of Christ; under a *threefold* consideration, all serving to clear up this point.

1. It is represented as a *price* of redemption, Mat. xx. 28. "The Son of man came to give his life a ransom for many." Rev. v. 9. "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood."

A *second* consideration is, *of a sacrifice.* The sins of the people were *typically* laid upon *the sacrifice,* and then it was slain; so Christ was sacrificed for us, Eph. v. 2. "Christ hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God of a sweet smelling savour." 1 Cor. v. 7. "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us." The fruit of this is reconciliation.

A *third* consideration of them, is, *they are a punishment.* Jesus Christ took upon him the guilt of our sins; that is, our obligation to punishment. The demerit of sin, whereby the sinner deserves punishment, was not translated to him: As the merit of his righteousness is not translated to us, but the title to blessedness arising therefrom; so Christ took upon himself our obligation to punishment; and accordingly God inflicted the punishment of our sins upon him. Christ was legally guilty of our sins, and God punished him. 1 Pet. ii. 24. "He bare our sins in his own body upon the tree." Isaiah liii. 4. "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows." Rom. iv. 25. "He was delivered for our offences." And here we may take notice of a great difference between the *first* and *second Adam.* The first *Adam* brought the guilt of *one* sin upon us; but

Jesus

Jesus Christ takes away the guilt, not only of that, but of our *innumerable personal transgressions.* And this the apostle minds, Rom. v. 16. " And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift ; for the judgment was by one to condemnation ; but the free gift is of many offences to justification." The first sin that man is guilty of, lays him open unto death ; and his after sins do *multiply* his obligations unto death, but do not expose him unto so many *several deaths ;* yet they do expose him unto a sorer and greater degree of eternal death. Where there are several sins meeting in the same person, they are to be punished with an aggravated death ; for every sin must be accounted for in the day of judgment, Eccl. xii. 14. And therefore Christ that he might procure a remission of all our sins, bore a punishment proportionable to them all, Isaiah liii. 5. " He was wounded for our transgressions." What he redeemed us from, that he endured himself, Gal. iii. 13. ; only it must be remembered, that, by reason of the dignity of his person, that sorrow which he eudured, was a *greater measure* of punishment, than it would have been in us.

The *eighth* thing to be considered, is, *That the righteousness of Jesus Christ is sufficient for the elect of God in all ages.* He has an everlasting priesthood, and the virtue of his sacrifice does continue from the beginning to the end of the world ; therefore he is said " to bring in everlasting righteousness," Dan. ix. 24.

His righteousness was efficacious *for the ages before his coming.* Though it was not then actually wrought out in former generations, this righteousness was availa-

ble

ble for justification. As a man may be discharged of a debt because of the bond of his surety, before the money is paid ; so Christ was preached as the way of salvation from the very fall of *Adam*, Gen. iii. 15. " The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head." The way that the *patriarchs* were justified, was by faith in Christ, Rom. iv. 3. Hence they are said to be *saved by grace*, Acts xv. 11. The covenant which was made with *Abraham*, was made in consideration of the righteousness of Christ, Gal. iii. 17. " The covenant that was confirmed before by God in Christ." Christ was actually slain after the world had stood about four thousand years ; but he was reckoned as " slain from the foundation of the world," Rev. xiii. 8. The virtue of his blood reached unto the first ages of the world. That is implied, Heb. ix. 25, 26. " Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high-priest entereth every year into the holy place with the blood of others, for then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world ; but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." Hence there was through him, " remission of the sins that were past." Rom. iii. 25. He died for the redemption of transgressions " that were under the first Testament," Heb. ix. 15. The means of the salvation of the fathers was accomplished in the days of the gospel. They were saved before, but the price of the salvation was paid when Christ died : that is intended by that expression, Heb. xi. 40. " God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect."

His righteousness is also *efficacious for all ages after his*

*his coming*. Christ paid for the salvation of those generations that were not born then. He satisfied for sins that were not then committed ; for God has appointed the gospel to be preached to the end of the world, Mat. xxviii. 19, 20. Yea, Christ appointed that his death should be shewed forth in the *Lord's Supper*, unto the day of judgment, 1 Cor. xi. 26. In the redemption of Christ, God shewed grace *to the ages to come*, Eph. ii. 7. There will be some saved by Christ in all ages to the end of the world, Eph. iii. 31. The saints under *Antichrist* are said to be redeemed by Christ, Rev. xiv. 6.

The *reason* of this everlasting efficacy of Christ's righteousness, is *from God's acceptance*. God might accept it as well before it was wrought out, as after : And it was as easy for Christ to redeem millions of men as one. Christ being a surety, the same righteousness that will serve for one, will serve for all. As it is with the sin of *Adam*, it is as sufficient to condemn millions as one. And if Christ had been to redeem many more, he needed not to have done or suffered any thing more. What is done by the representative, is reckoned to all them whom he represents.

The *last proposition* for the clearing of the argument, is, *That Christ has so purchased salvation, that the Elect cannot fail of it.*

And herein lies one great difference between the *first Adam* and the *second* ; though the first *Adam* made us heirs of death, yet there is a possibility of our escaping destruction ; but the second *Adam* has so made us heirs of life,

life, as that it is impossible that the elect should miss thereof. That is intended, Rom. v. 17. "If by one man's offence death reigned by one, much more they that receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one Jesus Christ." Christ's purchase gives us such a title to salvation, as that there can be no failure of it; 2 Thes. ii. 10. "God has given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace." The reason of the difference is, because there was an exception in the law, that we must die, except our surety died for us. But the promise of eternal life which Christ has purchased, does admit of no exception, Psal. lxxii. 17. "Men shall be blessed in him." According to that promise to *Jacob*, all the families of the earth should be blessed in his seed; and the promise made unto believers, does admit of no exception. There are many promises that have a limited interpretation; some are *indefinite*, and some are *conditional*; but this promise is *absolute* and *universal*, John iii. 16. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him might not perish but have everlasting life."

Before I leave this argument, it is needful to answer one *objection*; which is this,

*If Christ's righteousness be that which the law requires of us, then God would deal with those that have an interest in that, as he would have done if they had performed that righteousness themselves; as he would have done if* Adam *had kept the covenant of works; but he does not do thus. The promise in the covenant of works is life, which*

*includes*

*includes all manner of felicity ; but believers are far short of felicity ; they have much sin remaining in them, are left to fall into many sins ; they are liable to very sore and dreadful afflictions, and to death. The* promise *of the law is not fulfilled to them ; therefore it seems they have* not the righteousness of the law.

Ans. 1. *These sorrows do not come upon the people of God for want of a perfect righteousness, or for want of complete satisfaction.* And this is an evidence of it ; because these sorrows do not come in a way of vindictive justice or vengeance ; though they are, for the *matter* of them, the same with the curses of the law, yet not for the *manner*. They do not come to satisfy God for sin. Those saints that have the most sin have not always the most sorrow. To be left unto sin, is not a curse to the people of God. *Hezekiah* was left to sin in mercy, 2 Chron. xxxii. 31. " It was that he might know what is in his heart." And so their *afflictions*, Rev. iii. 19. " Whom I love, I rebuke and chasten." Jer. xxiv. 5. " I have sent them into the land of the Chaldeans for their good." Sin opens a door to afflictions, but God brings them in mercy. All the " ways of the Lord are mercy and truth to such as keep his covenant and his testimonies," Psal. xxv. 10.

2. *Though Christ has fulfilled the righteousness of the law for us, yet God is not absolutely bound to reward the righteousnesss of Christ, just in the same manner as he would have done the righteousness of* Adam. Though the righteousness be the same, yet there may be circumstantial differences in the reward. Blessedness is the reward of righteousness ; but there may be some circumstantial

parts of the reward that may differ. As it was with the sufferings of Christ, he suffered not in all things the same that the elect should have done, but yet he suffered as much; so it is here. Christ has purchased perfect blessedness for us, yet he has not so purchased it, that God is bound to bring us presently, and at once into the possession of it. Christ has purchased the good of the covenant of works, viz. blessedness; to be dispensed to us *according to the tenor of the covenant of grace,* viz. to have it begun here, and perfected hereafter. Therefore he is called, *the mediator of the new covenant,* Heb. xii. 24. And his blood is called, *the blood of the everlasting covenant,* Heb. xiii. 20.

3. *There is special reason also why God should not wholly deliver his people from sin and sorrow in this world.* The special reason why he leaves them to *sin,* is, to take occasion thereby for the magnifying of his *pardoning grace.* There are also weighty reasons why he exercises his people here with many *sorrows;* in particular, that he may vindicate his own *holiness;* and that he may carry on the work of sanctification in them, in a way suitable unto the nature of man.

## CHAP. IV.

*The* second *Argument, from the Prophecies and Types of the Old Testament. The* third *Argument, from GOD's Love in giving His Son to die for us. The* fourth *Argument, from the Exaltation of CHRIST.* Arg.

Arg. II. *GOD has foretold in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, that Christ should bring us to Salvation by his Righteousness; therefore it is safe appearing before God in it.*

GOD has foretold this, both in the plain *prophecies* that he gave to the ancient church, and in those *types* that he gave them, wherein this truth was represented.

I. It was foretold *in the* PROPHECIES *of the Old Testament.* God, by degrees, did reveal much of the way of salvation unto the church of *Israel,* though it fell abundantly short of those manifestations which he has given in gospel times; yet, what was then made known, serves as a great confirmation of the truth of the gospel. And I shall not insist on such prophecies, as do only hold forth salvation by Christ, without revealing the particular way of it; as, where it is said, "the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head; that in him all the families of the earth should be blessed; that he should be a light to the Gentiles; and salvation to the ends of the earth:" though I might make good the argument from hence; for our condition was such, that Christ could not save us without working out righteousness for us. But I shall only urge *such prophecies* as do hold forth Christ's *saving of us by his righteousness:* Of which there are these *four* sorts.

1. It was foretold that the *church should have their righteousness from Christ;* that they should derive their justification from him, Isaiah xlv. 24. "Surely shall one say, in the Lord Jehovah have I righteousness and strength." Righteousness is not here taken for holiness,

or

or the righteousness of sanctification, but the righteousness of *justification*. The church has its justification from him by the *imputation of his righteousness*: And hence that name, *The Lord our Righteousness*, is given to Christ, Jer. xxiii. 6. And the same name is given to the church, Jer. xxxiii. 16.; both of them in remembrance that the church does derive her righteousness from Christ. Accordingly, Christ is said "to bring in everlasting righteousness," Dan. ix. 24.

2. It was foretold *that Christ should die for our sins.* The death of Christ was not only foretold, but also upon what account it should be, 1 Cor. xv. 3. "Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures." This we have at large set down in Isai. liii. Where we may mind,

(1.) *What* he suffered; namely, *death*, besides many other calamities. "He was brought as a lamb to the slaughter," verse 7. "He was cut off out of the land of the living," verse 8. "God made his soul an offering," verse 10.

(2.) Upon *what account* he suffered; "The Lord hath laid it on him the iniquity of us all," verse 6.

(3.) *What benefit* redounds to us by his sufferings. *By his knowledge*, that must not be understood subjectively, but objectively, by the knowledge of him, "shall my righteous servant justify many, for he shall bear their iniquities."

3. It was foretold that Christ should effect our salvation, by doing that for us, which sacrifice and burnt offering

ing could not do, Psal. xl. 6, 7, 8. "Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire, but mine ears hast thou opened," &c. Concerning which Scripture, you may observe these things.

(1.) That the thing that sacrifices could not effect for us, *was our reconciliation.* There was some imagination in men, that sacrifices should make their peace; but God did not accept them upon that account.

(2.) When he says, "mine ears hast thou opened," he speaks concerning Christ. This we have the authority of the apostle for, Heb. x. 5.

(3.) By this phrase is imported *the obedience and sufferings of Christ.* It is thought to be an allusion to the custom of servants, in having their ears bored. The apostle therefore to the *Hebrews,* gives the sense of the words, "a body hast thou prepared me;" that is, in order to the doing and suffering of the will of God.

(4.) That hereby he effected that which sacrifices could not, Heb. x. 9. "He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second."

4. It was foretold that *Christ should rise from the dead*; and that upon that account there is great ground of hope to his servants in their death. That we have, Psal. xvi. 9, 10. "My flesh also shall rest in hope, for thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine holy one to see corruption." Where mind,

(1.) That these latter expressions were a prophecy of Christ's speedy resurrection from the dead. Thus the

apostle *Peter* does interpret it, Acts ii. 3. "He spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption."

(2.) That this was *a ground of hope.* And the resurrection of Christ is principally a ground of hope, as it is an argument and evidence, that Christ, by his death, has satisfied the justice of God for our sins.

II. This truth was also foretold in the TYPES of the Old Testament. God did, by many shadows and figures, teach the church of *Israel* this truth. *A type* is any *person, action or thing, appointed by God to signify or represent some gospel truths.* The types of the *Old Testament* were instituted of God to shadow forth Christ Jesus. "They were a shadow of things to come, but the body is of Christ," Col. ii. 17. And many of them did particularly represent this truth of our salvation by the righteousness of Christ. Particularly,

1. The *sacrifices* did teach this truth. The offering up of sacrifice was a principal part of the instituted worship of God of old. It was appointed immediately upon the fall, and the institution thereof renewed at *Mount Sinai,* and vindicated from many corruptions wherewith man had depraved them; and, although there were some other particular intendment of some of them, yet the general end of them all was to make *atonement,* and procure the remission of sin, Lev. i. 4. The design of them was to procure the remission of sin. "Without shedding of blood is no remission," Heb. ix. 22. And therefore it was their manner to *confess their sins* when they brought their sacrifice, Lev. v. 5. The sacrifice

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was *slain* instead of the sinner, Gen. xxii. 13. And in those sacrifices God is said to "smell a savour of rest," Gen. 8. 21. The offerings are often called a *sweet savour*. And these sacrifices did *shadow* forth the *satisfaction* that Jesus Christ was to make for our sins. The great end of them was to lead the church into a dependence upon the sacrifice of Christ; to shadow forth to them how acceptable and pleasing that would be unto God. These legal sacrifices could not make *real*, but only *typical satisfaction*; they were not a proportionable price to ransom men's souls by. The apostle tells us, "it was not possible that they should take away sins," Heb. x. 4. The design of them was to be types of the satisfaction that was to be made by the death of Christ. In those sacrifices was shadowed forth, that Christ Jesus was to be put to death: For the sacrifices were slain, that he was to be slain upon the account of our sins; so the sacrifices were types, that he was to suffer the *wrath of God*; as the sacrifices were *burnt up with fire from heaven*, that the death of Christ was an effectual means to reconcile us unto God. That these sacrifices were types of Christ making atonement, is clear, because Christ is often called *a sacrifice*, Eph. v. 2. And said *to offer up himself*, Heb. ix. 26.

Hence also he is called, "The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world," Rev. xiii. 8. It is clear also, because, upon his death, the sacrifices of the law were to cease; those laws are now abolished; now there is no use of those sacrifices. The offerings of Christ were the accomplishment of what was typified of old; Heb. xiii. 12, 13.

2. The

2. The *Passover* or *Paschal Lamb* did also hold forth this truth, and teach the efficacy of the death of Christ for our salvation. By this ordinance of the *Passover*, the *Paschal Lamb* was to be slain, and the blood thereof to be sprinkled upon the lintel and posts of the door: and therewithal many other ceremonies were to be attended. The immediate design of this, in the first celebration of it, was to be a means to procure the destroying angel's passing over the houses of the *Israelites*; in the after celebration of it, it was to be a *commemoration* of this mercy; and in conjunction with the *feast* of the Passover, it was also a commemoration of the delivering of *Israel* out of *Egypt*; but the *principal* and *ultimate* design of it was to teach them, *their deliverance from eternal destruction*, and their *spiritual redemption by Jesus Christ*. The efficacy of the blood of Christ for our salvation is herein held forth. This appears,

1. Because *the deliverance out of Egypt was a type of our spiritual and eternal deliverance.* And therefore it is made the *preface* to the *ten commandments*, Exod. xx. 2. We are not concerned in that argument any further, than as it shadows forth spiritual redemption. They were delivered out of *Egypt*, that they might be brought into *Canaan*, which was a *type* of heaven.

2. Jesus Christ is called *our Passover*, 1 Cor. v. 7. "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us." He is called a Passover, because in him was fulfilled what was shadowed by the Passover.

3. Christ's *blood is called the blood of sprinkling*, Heb. xii. 24. 1 Pet. i. 2. This has not a peculiar reference

erence to the Passover, for the blood of the sacrifices also was *sprinkled ;* but it has a joint reference to the blood of the sacrifices and the passover.

4. The evangelist *John,* when he relates how the soldiers *did not break the legs of Christ,* as they did of those that were crucified with him, takes notice of it as the accomplishment of a prophecy, John xix. 36. " For these things were done that the Scriptures should be fulfilled, a bone of him shall not be broken." But we find no prophecy that way in the Scripture, only this, that they were enjoined not to break a bone of the *Paschal Lamb,* Exod. xii. 46. Numb. xix. 12. Whereby God taught them that passage, that at Christ's sufferings *not a bone of him should be broken.*

3. The *purifyings and washings under the law,* held forth this truth. By those washings and sprinkling, their ceremonial uncleannesses were purged away, Lev. xiv. 2. Numb. xxxi. 24. By this was held forth the *purification of the soul* by the *blood* of Jesus Christ, Heb. ix. 13, 14. " For if the blood of bulls and goats, and the ashes of an heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh : how much more shall the blood of Christ purge our consciences ?" *David* has reference to these purifyings, when he says, " Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean," Psal. li. 7. And hence it is that we have such expressions in the prophets ; " He shall sprinkle many nations," Isaiah. lii. 15. " I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean," Ezek. xxxvi. 25. Hence also it is said of them, Rev. vii. 14. " They had washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb,"

4. The *freedom of the man-slayer* at the *death* of the *high-priest*, holds out the same truth. He that casually slew a man, was to abide in the city of refuge, until the death of the high-priest, and then was to return to his own city, Numb. xxxv. 25. Josh. xx. 6. That was to signify to them that *spiritual liberty* that is procured for us by the *death of Christ*. Christ Jesus is our high-priest, Heb. iii. 1. Heb. vii. 26. And by his death has wrought out deliverance for us, Zech. ix. 11. "As for thee also, by the blood of thy covenant, I have sent forth the prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water."

5. The *brazen serpent* was a type of this. The brazen serpent was lifted up in the wilderness, that they that were stung with the flying fiery serpents, might look upon it and be healed, Numb. xxi. 8, 9. This did shadow forth the *healing virtue of Christ crucified*. The *application* of the type is made by Christ himself, John iii. 14, 15. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him, might not perish, but have everlasting life." Mind,

(1.) *A similitude between the condition of him that was stung, and the sinner.* The venom of the serpent was very tormenting, and that may be one reason why the serpents are called fiery, because this poison burnt like fire. Thus it is with the guilty sinner; his heart is full of perplexing sorrow, and he is tormented with the fiery darts of the evil one.

(2.) *There is a similitude between the lifting up of the brazen serpent, and the manner of Christ's death:* therefore

fore his death is set forth by that phrase of being *lifted up*. That phrase notes his sufferings. John viii. 28. "When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then ye shall know that I am he." John xii. 32, 33. "And if I be lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men unto me: this he said signifying what death he should die.

(3.) *There is a similitude between the carriage of him that was stung, and the guilty sinner.* He that was stung must *look* upon the brazen serpent; the guilty sinner must *behold* this Lamb of God with an eye of faith, believe in him, and he shall be saved.

6. The *manna* and the *water out of the rock*, held forth this truth. They were fed with *manna* for forty years; and the *water out of the rock followed them* almost so long. Whereby God represented unto them the *nourishing virtue of Christ crucified*; and therefore the *Apostle* calls the manna, *spiritual meat*, and the water of the rock, *spiritual drink*: and not only so, but he calls them the same *spiritual* meat and drink; that is, the same which we partake of under the gospel, 1 Cor. xxiii. 3, 4. And Christ says, that it is *his flesh* that is the *true spiritual meat*, and his *blood* that is the *true spiritual drink*. John vi. 55. "My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed." And Christ Jesus teaches the *Jews*, that he is "the true bread that came down from heaven," John vi. 49, 50. "Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread that cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die."

7. *The*

7. *The white garments of the priests*, and *the beautiful garments* of the *high priest*, hold forth this truth. Whereby is taught that *comeliness* in the sight of God, th at does arise from the righteousness of Christ. This is evident from the interpretation given, Zech. iii. 4. "Take away the filthy garments from him: and unto him he said, I have caused thine iniquity to pass away, & thou shalt be clothed with change of raiment." The taking away of filthy garments, notes the taking away of iniquity: therefore clothing with change of raiment, notes, the *putting on of the robe of Christ's righteousness*: So the righteousness of Christ is set forth by *white raiment*, Rev. iii. 18.

God sets forth the efficacy of Christ's righteousness by these *various types*, that the church of old might be well principled in this doctrine. God was leading of them into an understanding of this way of salvation; directing of them to look for salvation only through the sufferings and obedience of Jesus Christ; the various representations whereof, were of great use to beget faith in such as understood the meaning thereof, and were a great evidence of that delight which God took in the righteousness which Christ was to fulfil in the fulness of time.

Arg. III. *Because God has had such love to sinners, as to send his Son to die, that they might be reconciled unto him*; therefore *there is no question to be made of it, but he will bestow salvation on all those that have an interest in the death of Christ.*

This is the apostle's argument, Rom. v. 8, 9. "But God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us: much more being

now

now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath by him." And in the next verse, he repeats the argument in other terms: "For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son; much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." The meaning of the argument is, that if God had so much love to us, as to send his Son to purchase our reconciliation, when we were offenders, then certainly, being brought into a state of reconciliation by Christ, we shall be saved by him."

In opening this argument, we shall consider,

First, the *foundation* that he builds it upon, and then the *force of the consequences.*

1. The *foundation* that he builds this argument on is, *That God had such love to sinners, as to send his Son to die for them.* This was an act of wonderful love. It was great love in Christ to come to die, and great love in the Father to send him to die. This was more than man could hope for, when he had sinned; it was quite beyond his expectation: This was such compassion as could enter into the heart of none but God himself to contrive. If the thoughts of holy angels had been asked-they would have thought it too great a mercy to have been bestowed on sinful man. They were wonderfully affected with it when it came to pass, Luke ii. 13, 14. "There suddenly was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace and good-will towards men." Indeed, in this affair, God acted principally from a love to his own glory, that he might in this

way, manifest that *mystery of the trinity,* and his *glorious attributes;* yet this does not derogate from the greatness of God's *love* in sending his Son to die. Man's corrupt reason is ready to entertain diminutive thoughts of the compassions of God in this thing. Sometimes the heart reasons, that God did it for his own glory. But he could have glorified himself in man's ruin ; or he might have glorified his grace towards the *angels* that fell, and not towards man. And certainly, if God did it for his glory, men do very ill to entertain any thoughts that do diminish from the glory of God. Sometimes the heart reasons, that it would have been hard measure for God to have left mankind to have perished without providing a way of salvation ; seeing we came sinners into the world. But it was upon no such account that God did it ; he was not conscious of any wrong in his dealings to man. His dispensations towards mankind, in punishing of them with the loss of his image for their sin in *Adam,* and in imputing the sin of *Adam,* is equal and righteous. Rom. iii. 23. "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God." Men likewise reason, sometimes against the riches of God's grace in this thing from hence, that sin does not hurt God. But though it does not hurt him, yet it wrongs him. If a man should revile his prince, it may be it would not hurt him ; if he should throw stones at him, as *Shimei* did at *David,* yet he might not hurt him, but he would wrong him greatly : So sin is a great wrong unto God, Plas. li. 4. "Against thee, thee only have I sinned." And it is wonderful love for God to give his Son to die for us, John iii. 16. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son," &c.

I shall pass by other considerations, to help to shew the greatness of his love, and only select these *five* that serve to enforce the argument that lies before us.

1. It was great love that *God should send his Son to endure such sore sufferings for us.* It was much that God should condescend, upon any account, that his Son should undergo such sufferings. It was a great thing that God should be willing that Christ should be brought into such a condition: when we consider the glorious *excellency* of his *person*, and the *dear love* of the Father to him, it may well be admired by us, that God should find in his heart to put him upon such sufferings. We may well conclude, that those persons for whose sakes all this was, were greatly beloved of God, that the heart of God was mightily concerned in their good. It was a great thing for the glorious Son of God to suffer any thing, much more to bear what he did. His suffering was very great: "He was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief," Isai. liii. 4.

(1.) He *suffered much pain.* If many men have endured more bodily pain, yet it was a great deal that the Son of God endured; especially when he was cruelly scourged, and after that crucified. That manner of death was exquisitely painful, Psal. xxii. 16. "They pierced my hands and my feet." The nailing of his body to the cross, and the weight of his body being borne by those wounded parts for so many hours, could not be without *exquisite pain.* He expresses it by "his bones being out of joint," Psal. xxii. 14. It must needs be a terrible torture, because persons that were crucified, were not wont to be very long in that condition before they died.

ed. The suddenness of their death could not be from the mere effusion of blood, but the *exquisiteness of their pain* contributed much to it.

(2.) He suffered *much disgrace:* He endured all manner of indignities from men. He of whom God said, let all the angels of God worship him, subjected himself to great contempt; they flouted at him, *mocked* him, made themselves sport in abusing him, *spit on him:* yea, the punishments that were inflicted on him, were very disgraceful, such as were wont to be inflicted on the *basest* of men. The death of the cross was a *shameful* death. His enemies studied to render him vile and contemptible. The *Heathens* were wont afterwards to upbraid the Christians with their crucified God.

(3.) He suffered *much inward trouble;* not only from the sense he had of his outward troubles, and from the temptations of the Devil, but also from *God's withdrawing the sense of his favour,* and putting into him the *sense of his wrath.* The fiery wrath of God, typified by that fire from heaven that consumed the sacrifices, took hold of him. As believers have great inward peace of conscience arising from his righteousness; so had he great inward sorrow arising from the guilt of our sins. He tells his disciples, "That his soul was exceeding sorrowful, and very heavy, even unto death," Mat. xxvi. 38. And, as this was the occasion of his *sweating great drops of blood,* so probably of his sudden death. He died before the others that were crucified with him; of which it is hard to assign any other reason than this, that the sense of God's wrath much hastened his death. As

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God tells *Moses*, that *no man can see his face and live*: that is, the sight of God's love and glory as the saints see it in heaven, is such, that the nature of man in this state of mortality cannot bear it; it would kill him to have such a sight: so there is a parity of reason that the sense of God's wrath in the extremity of it, is too much for mortal man to bear; and was the thing that hastened the death of Christ.

(4.) He suffered *a state of death, and he continued in a state of death for some time.* His body and soul were rent asunder; which state is contrary unto nature. The union of body and soul was dissolved, and his body left for a time stark dead, and his soul in a preternatural estate of separation; a state which nature does abhor; exceeding contrary to the instinct and inclination of nature.

2. It was great love for *God to send his Son to die for us, when we had grievously offended him.* For we were looked upon under that consideration, when God sent his Son to die for our salvation. It is true, that at that time some of the Elect were in heaven, wholly saved from the guilt and pollution of sin. Others of them were not then born, and so were incapable of being actual offenders at that time: But we were looked upon in that action as *offenders*; for the sins of the Elect that were in heaven were not at that time satisfied for, their debt was not paid. And God certainly knew that the Elect that were to be born, would be offenders. Christ, when he died, died for transgressors, Isaiah liii. 6. "All we like the sheep have gone astray, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of us all." For God to take such care

of the salvation of man that had *abused him,* and *provoked him,* is a great manifestation of love. Had we never angered him, nor given him any occasion against us; much more, had we done much for him; it would not have been so strange to see him laying out himself to the utmost for our salvation. But to see him in such a wonderful way working about the salvation of those that had greatly offended him, and given cause of trouble; with whom he was grievously incensed; must make us to say, Hence is unparalleled love! Those for whom God hath done this, have been great offenders. This appears by these *three* things,

(1.) *They are guilty of innumerable transgressions.* The sins of the Elect are beyond their account; they are more than the hairs of their heads, Psal. xl. 12. Sin is flowing from them as water from a fountain; their lives are filled with sin. Beside the sin they committed in *Adam,* there is the sin of their nature, which is a standing provocation, which by its remaining in the soul, brings *new guilt* every *minute;* besides what it does by the influence that it has into actual transgressions. While they continue in their natural condition, all their *moral actions* are *sins:* Besides those actions which for the *matter* of them are *sinful,* which are *many,* the rest are sinful for the *manner;* and after conversion, there is sin in all their actions. There is abundance of iniquity, that every elect vessel that grows up to years, is guilty of.

(2.) *That every sin is a great wrong unto God.* Sin is an horrible injury unto God. Sin is *rebellion* against God. Sinning is the casting off of the yoke of God. Sinning

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is an *insurrection* of the soul against God, Luke xix. 14. In sin there is also great *contempt* cast upon God. Sin is a vilifying and slighting of God. Men expose the name of God to scorn by sinning against him, Rom. ii. 23. Sin is also *enmity* against him. In all obedience there is love; in all disobedience there is hatred. Sinners *strike* at God when they sin, John xv. 24. God is greatly wronged by all sin; and the sins of the people of God have many of them *particular aggravations* that do greatly increase the offences.

(3.) *That every man is the proper cause of his own sin, and the guilt of it does properly belong to him.* The carnal reason of man is casting in many objections from the decree of God, from the withdrawing of the divine assistance, and from the corruption of nature: But the scripture does allow none of these objections, but fastens the guilt of sin upon him *that does transgress the law*, and blames men for their iniquities. And men lay not weight on these cavils, so as to excuse others that are injurious unto them; and there is this reason for it, because men act voluntary in their transgressions; they are not forced to sin, but choose it.

3. It was great love for *God to give his Son to die for our salvation, when he might justly have damned us;* When it was a righteous thing for him to have ruined us, when he had us in his hands, and might have cast us off forever. His proceedings would not have been unjust, he had done us no wrong, there had been no *cruelty* in it, if he had thrown us into hell: he would not anywise have trespassed upon any rule of righteousness; but only have done that which was fair and equal; no imputa-

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tion of *injustice* could have been cast on him; he had nowise blemished his name, nor stained his glory. His proceedings must have been justified, and he would by our ruin have gained *glory* to his *justice*. In this time, to take care of our salvation, speaks more *free love*. If God could not fairly have done any other without staining his own name, there would not have been any such evidence of love; but the glory of his justice would have remained entire to him if we had perished. He sent his Son to die for our salvation, when he might with honor have cast us off; when there was no tie upon him to do any such thing, but he might fairly have damned us.

This is evident,

(1.) From *the proceedings of God*. God is a righteous God; it is impossible that he should vary one hair's breadth from the rule of righteousness. *The judge of all the world will do right*, Gen. xviii. 25. And his proceedings are such as do justify the casting off of sinful man. The constitution of the law does give in evidence of it. If the law had been unjust, it had been an unrighteous thing to make it, as well as execute it. And indeed God has not only made it, but executed it: He has executed it upon the angels that sinned, "He cast them down to hell," 1 Pet. ii. 2, 4. And he does execute it upon multitudes of men in all ages; multitudes perish according to this law; yea he has executed the law upon his Son Christ Jesus: "Christ has bore the curse for us," Gal. iii. 13. And had it not been just, God would not have inflicted it; had it not been just, Christ would not have subjected himself unto it.

(2.)

(2.) From *the acknowledgment and testimony of conscience.* Though there be abundance of cavils in the heart of man against this, yet when they come to be thoroughly enlightened, they witness to the justice of this proceeding. Many men's consciences have been silenced from objecting any thing against this. Many have been so convinced after all their arguings, that they *have been speechless,* as he Mat. xii. 12. They have fallen down at God's foot, and yielded themselves to be justly miserable ; that whatever become of them, they had nothing to accuse God of, Psal. li. 4. All men must first or last own this, and *yield themselves guilty,* Rom. iii. 19.

(3.) From *the nature of sin.* Sin is an injury unto God : the spirit of sin is to destroy God, Psal. xiv. 1. And besides this, when men sin, they break that law which has threatenings of ruin annexed unto it, and run upon the point of the sword, and cast themselves into the jaws of death, Ezek. xxxiii. 11.

4. It was great love for God to give his Son to die for our salvation, in this respect, that he did it, *not having received, nor ever expecting to receive, satisfaction for the mercy.* Our *salvation* is principally from the grace of God ; but *that* has been paid for : But the sending of Christ to die for sinners, is merely from the *grace* of God, and has never been paid for, nor ever will. Justification, adoption, sanctification, and eternal glory have been purchased : but the sending of Christ into the world to die was never purchased ; God never received any recompence for this mercy ; he never had any satisfaction for this mercy, 1 John iv. 10. " He loved us, and sent his

his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." The method and order of working about our salvation is this.

(1.) Free and *gracious election;* which is the first cause of redemption and salvation, and an effect of neither of them.

(2.) *Redemption,* which is the effect of election, and cause of salvation.

(3.) *Salvation,* both in the *beginnings* of it *here,* in *holiness* and *spiritual comfort,* and in the *perfection* of it *hereafter,* which is the effect both of election and redemption. So that though salvation be paid for, yet God's sending of his Son to die for us, was a mere fruit of electing grace, and never paid for. And there are *two reasons* of this.

1. *This was too great a mercy to be paid for.* Our salvation was an exceeding great mercy, but not too great to be purchased; but this was. A *Mediator* could not be purchased. This mercy was not too great to be given, but it was too great to be purchased. We might more easily have purchased our redemption than our redeemer. Neither did Christ purchase this mercy for us: Christ did not buy his own office. What price could be laid down to satisfy God for such an *unspeakable gift?*

2. *This mercy might be bestowed upon us without being purchased.* God had so bound himself by *his law,* that man could not be saved without *satisfaction;* that mercy must be purchased: But God had not so bound himself by his law, but that it was free for him to send his Son to die, without receiving any satisfaction for this mercy.

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God had tied his own hands so, that sinners could not be saved without satisfaction; his *faithfulness* bound him to stand upon that: But God was at liberty to send a *Mediator* if he pleased: His own *gracious nature* was such, that he could do it without any purchase; and he had not restrained himself by his *word*.

5. It was great love for God to send his son to die for man's salvation, *when he would have been no loser if man had not been saved.* If the case had been so circumstanced, that God would have suffered much loss if men had failed of salvation, there had then been a kind of necessity laid upon God to have sent his Son to die in order to it; but God bestowed this mercy upon us, when it would have been no *loss* unto him if we had perished.

This may be cleared up by these considerations,

(1.) This mercy of giving Christ to die for us, *was the first thing wherein God laid out himself for our salvation.* When a person has laid out himself much, and been at great expence for the accomplishing of a design, it is a disappointment to fail of it, and his expence is thereby many times lost. But God had not been before this at any expence for man's salvation; this was the first thing wherein God laid out himself for our salvation. With respect to us who live in these latter days, the death of Christ was actually before any other endeavours for our salvation; and with respect to those elect that lived before the coming of Christ, his death was virtually before any other expence for their salvation, Rev. iii. 8.

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(2.) If God had not sent his Son to die, *yet he needed not to have lost the glory of his laying out of his wisdom, power and goodness, in man's creation.* What he had expended that way would not have been lost; but he would have recovered his glory in man's ruin, Prov. xvi. 4.

(3.) *God could have found other ways to have glorified his grace.* Though God was under no necessity of having any declarative glory; neither does he glorify himself *ad ultimum virium,* to the utmost of his power; yet it does please him to glorify his attributes and he might have honoured his mercy in the salvatian of fallen angels. They were capable of salvation, and it would have been a wonderful exalting of God's grace to have saved them.

2. The next thing to be observed is, *the force of the apostle's consequence.* He argues, from God's love in sending Christ to die for us, the *certain salvation of those that are reconciled by his death.* And there is no scruple to be made of their salvation, though they have many enemies that seek their ruin, though they have much sin remaining in them, and have been many ways failing of walking up to that exactnes, which God requires. All those that Christ died for, and are first or last interested in his death, shall be saved by him.

1. If God had so great a love as to send his Son to *bear such great sufferings to purchase our salvation, then he will not fail to do whatever else is necessary for our salvation.* He will not stick to do what is else to be done for the completing of our salvation. He that has

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done the greater, will do the less. If love overcame the difficulty that was in the way of our redemption, it will also overcome whatever difficulty is in the way of the application of redemption. It is unreasonable to think that God should have love enough to send his Son, to do that which cannot be done without *pain, and sorrow, and death,* and not have love enough to do that which he can do, with the *speaking of a word.* The great difficulty in the way of our salvation, was the purchasing of it: there was wrath to be borne, a curse to be endured; but love broke through that difficulty. The rest that remains is easy to God. The mortification of sin, the quickening of grace, the repelling of temptation, and giving the actual possession of glory, may be effected by God without any difficulty; and therefore he will not stick at that, Rom. viii. 32 "If God spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" It is true that God does, but by little and little, carry on in us the work of sanctification; but the reason of that is, not that it is anywise difficult unto him, but because that suits the design that is upon his heart. Neither is it from any unwillingness to help us, but because his design is to carry on the work of sanctification; so that we shall have continual need of *justification.* We find it difficult to do our part in order to our salvation, but it is not difficult to God to do his part. God carries on the work without difficulty, yet so that we shall find difficulty. As a parent with ease helps the child to go, yet so that the child finds difficulty to go; it is no burden to God to uphold grace. He that upholds the frame of nature with the word of his power, can easily uphold grace. What-

ever stands an impediment in the way of our salvation, may be removed by God without any trouble. God puts forth thousands of acts of omnipotency to effect things that are less upon his heart, than the salvation of those that he has redeemed. And it is no pain nor weariness unto God, to be daily carrying on the work of our salvation. The opposition that is made to it, is nothing to omnipotency, Isaiah xl. 28. " The Creator of the ends of the earth fainteth not, neither is weary."

2. If God had such love to us as to send his Son to die for us, *when we had grievously offended him ; he will, now he is reconciled, do what remains in order to our salvation.* When provocations lay in the way, yet he drove on this design of our salvation ; therefore he will do it much more, now those provocations are removed. When he looked upon us as *offenders*, he did much in order to our blessedness ; therefore, now he looks upon us as *friends*, he will not think much to effect what remains. If he was not willing that we should die, when we were guilty sinners, he will not be willing that we should die, now our guilt is removed. When he was angry, he spared no cost for our salvation ; we may be sure, then, he will not, now he is pacified. Now there is no obstruction in the way of God's love to hinder the course thereof ; justice is now satisfied ; God's anger is done away by Christ ; the sacrifice of Christ has pleased God, Eph. v. 2. Christ Jesus has wrought out " full reconciliation for us," Col. i. 20. God's anger is turned away through the mediation of Christ. God has satisfied himself to his own content for the wrongs that they have done him ; so that there is no offence to ly as a bar in the way of their salvation.

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3. If God had so much love as to give his Son to die for our salvation, *when he might justly have damned us, surely he will save us when he cannot justly damn us, but is bound in justice to save us.* When he might righteously have destroyed us, he put himself to great cost for our salvation: then he will not break rules of righteousness to destroy us. God that would not take the opportunity to destroy us when we are in his hands, and he might fairly have done it, will not now destroy us when he himself has brought us into such a condition, that he cannot righteously do it. God now stands bound unto Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ has suffered the law, and therefore God is bound to save all those that Christ died for. Upon what account should they fear that God will damn them? Not upon account of their sins; they have been fully punished already. As it was an act of justice in God to punish Christ upon the account of imputed sin, so it is an act of justice to save those that have an interest in Christ on the account of imputed righteousness. Justice requires that they that are righteous, whether by personal obedience, or imputed righteousness, should have life. Christ has *paid a ransom for us*, Mat. xx. 28. And therefore we must in justice be set free.

4. If God had such love as to send Christ to die for us, *which mercy he was never satisfied for; surely he will do what else is requisite for our salvation, being fully satisfied for that.* It would be strange, if God, that has done such a thing as to give us his Son to die out of *mere grace*, without any recompence, should deny other things to us needful to complete our salvation, which he has taken satisfaction and recompence for. He that had such a

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dear love for us, to do that which could not be paid for, without any price, will do the rest seeing, *he has received the price of it*. God has taken a price for our justification, sanctification and salvation, Tit. ii. 14. Eph. i. 14. All covenant blessings are purchased.

5. God that had such love as to send his Son to die for our salvation, *when he would have been no loser if we had not been saved; he will complete our salvation, seeing if he do it not now, he would be a loser*. He would lose this cost that he has been at for our salvation. If he should suffer those to perish that Christ died for, then the death of Christ would be in vain. Time was, he might have let sinners have perished, and have lost nothing by it; but now, if he should let them perish that Christ died for, he would lose the glory of that undertaking. He would dishonor himself. He has laid a foundation with great cost; if he should not finish his work, his expenses would be lost, and Christ's death would be in vain. But, without doubt, God that has gone so far in this work, and has expended a treasure of mercy in order to it, will yet lay out whatever shall be further requisite for the completing of it.

Arg. IV. From the exaltation of Christ: *Because Christ who was our surety is exalted by God; it is safe for us to appear before God in his righteousness.*

Jesus Christ was a surety for us, Heb. vii. 22. "Jesus was a surety of a better testament." Jesus Christ was our undertaker, stood bound to satisfy our debt, and to satisfy the justice of God for the wrongs that we had done unto him; and therefore "he was made a curse for us," Gal. iii. 13. Our guilt was translated unto him.

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"God laid on him the iniquities of us all," Isai. liii. 6. And the punishment that was inflicted on him, was properly our punishment: "Surely he hath borne our grief, and carried our sorrow." Isaiah liii. 4. It was that punishment that firstly did belong unto us. He suffered upon the account of his public office and undertaking. As *Mediator*, he gave himself a ransom for us.

And Jesus Christ, who was our surety, after he had suffered for sinners, was *gloriously exalted* by God; God has advanced him unto an estate of glory. This exaltation of Christ does consist in *three* degrees.

*First*, His *resurrection from the dead*. This has been confirmed from the *testimony* of *angels*, those holy creatures which would not deceive us, Mark xvi. 6. Luke xxiv. 4, 5, 6.; from the testimony of his *friends*, who were well acquainted with him and could not easily be deceived. Acts ii. 32. Acts x. 40, 41.; from the testimony of *adversaries*, men who would have been glad if it had been otherwise, men that were under no temptation to lie for Christ, Mat. xxviii. 11. And this was according to the *predictions* of the *Old Testament*, 1 Cor. xv. 4. God put his soul into him again, and brought him out of the sepulchre. This was accomplished on the third day after his death. This time of his resurrection was foretold of old, and that in sundry places, Luke xxiv. 3, 4, 5, 6. It was foretold in the books of *Moses*, Gen. xxii. 24. compared with Heb. xi. 19.; in the *Prophets*, namely, in *Jonah*, chap. i. ii. Mat. xii. 40.; in the *Psalms*, Psal. xvi. 10. compared with Acts ii. 31.

*Secondly,* His *ascending into heaven.* His soul had been in heaven at the time of his death ; but forty days after his resurrection, when he had confirmed his disciples in the truth of his resurrection, and instructed them in other things pertaining to the kingdom of God, his whole human nature was taken into heaven. He is said " to ascend above all heavens," Eph. 4. 10. ; that is, into that heaven that is above the airy and starry heavens.

*Thirdly,* His *sitting down at the right hand of God,* Heb. iii. This phrase denotes *glory;* it is a metaphor taken from monarchs. To sit at the right hand of the prince is to sit in the second place of dignity ; the throne being the highest, the Lord Jesus is advanced unto greater glory in heaven, as he is man, than any angel ; in special, besides other particulars, in having the *administration and government of all things* in his hand.

This exaltation of Christ is a *clear evidence* of God's accepting that sacrifice that he offered up for us ; and being fully satisfied for our sins by the sufferings of Jesus Christ.

And there are *three* things therein, that serve to convince us hereof.

1. *By Christ's exaltation, he is delivered from that suffering estate which our sins brought him into.* He is hereby set free from that state of humiliation, which he was in for our sins. Vengeance had taken hold of Christ as our surety ; the justice of God seized him ; he was apprehended as one liable to the law ; and God took vengeance on him, and poured out wrath on him. But now, by his exaltation, he is set at liberty. Justice has dismissed

missed him; God has done exacting any more punishment on him; which is a clear evidence that he is *wholly discharged* of that guilt that was upon him. Christ subjected himself to the wrath of God, and God punished him as much as he pleased. Christ bore the curse, till God said it was enough. In his resurrection, God *opened the prison door*, and let him out. God sent an officer to deliver him from his grave, Mat. xxviii. 2. "The angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door." God's delivering of Christ, evidenceth the satisfaction that he has received by his sufferings. If Christ were not risen, it would be an argument that sins were not satisfied for, 1 Cor. xv. 17. "If Christ be not risen, your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins." But his resurrection shews, that God's demands are answered; and therefore, when Christ was raised from the dead, he is said *to be justified*. God gave him a legal acquittance and discharge from that guilt which he had taken upon him. 1 Tim. iii. 16. "God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the spirit." The apostle *Paul* expresseth it thus, "He was quickened in the spirit," 1 Pet. iii. 18. So that when he was quickened, he was justified. Christ could never have been delivered out of the hands of justice, if he had not paid the utmost farthing. Hence we are said to have a *lively hope by the resurrection of Christ*. 1 Pet. i. 3. "God has begotten us again to a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." This consideration is a means, by God's blessing, to beget a lively hope in us. The ground of our hope is the resurrection of Christ. It might better be rendered a *living hope*. The same word is rendered *living*, 1 Pet. ii. 4. This

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is such an hope as will abide and continue; the hope that is built upon this foundation, will never fail; other hopes may die away, but this is a living hope. A parallel Scripture to this is, 1 Pet. iii. 18. "We have the answer of a good conscience towards God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." A *well-informed* conscience is *satisfied* with this. When a man's conscience accuses him of sins, they are manifest, and he cannot deny them; heinous, and he cannot excuse them: yet this silences those accusations, that *Christ is risen*.

Conscience sees, in the resurrection of Christ, the *satisfactoriness of his sufferings*, and has peace on that account that the debt is paid. And, upon the same account it is, that *Paul* attributes power to the resurrection of Christ, Phil. iii. 10. "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection." When God sets this consideration home upon the heart, it has a mighty comforting power. This will raise up a drooping spirit. When a man is distressed indeed with the guilt of sin, the world has no power to comfort him; his priviledges cannot, his duties cannot: but this thing set home, has power to ease his heart, refresh his soul, silence his conscience. The sense of this brings great comfort to a Christian. And the *apostle* mentions this consideration as the security of Christians against condemnation; and as that which adds further encouragement to that which rises from his death, Rom. viii. 34. "Who is he that condemneth? it is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again."

2. *By Christ's exaltation, he is rewarded for his sufferings.* God presently, upon his sufferings, took him up into

into heaven, and bountifully rewarded him for his undertaking. Some seem loath to grant that Christ did merit for himself; but there is no danger in affirming, that, according to compact, God did gloriously recompence Christ for his obedience and sufferings for us. The primary design of Christ's undertaking was to merit for us; but it was every way suitable, that this service of his should be rewarded, Phil. ii. 8, 9. "He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross: wherefore God also hath highly exalted him." God took wonderful contentment in it, that Christ would lay down his life for us. That is the intendment of that expression, "therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life," John x. 17. God did highly approve of it, and took a complacency in it, and in Christ by reason of it; and manifested his approbation by rewarding it. Christ has a glorious reward in heaven; and this is an evidence that he has gone through his undertaking; that he has not failed in the work that God committed to him.

If Christ had *failed of righteousness*, not only *we*, but *he* also would have failed of *glory*. Christ's own glory had a dependence upon his working out of *perfect righteousness* as well as ours: his happiness and ours were embarked together. If he had not run the race, he had not been crowned: if he had not been a conqueror, he had not received the prize; if he had sunk under the work, and not completed our redemption, God would not have bestowed this reward upon him. But since he has received a glorious reward, we may conclude he has *done his work*, and *performed the office of a surety*. This

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argument the Spirit of God makes use of, John xvi. 8, 9, 10. "The Comforter will convince of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more." The way whereby Christ came to sit *down on the right hand of the majesty on high, was the purging of our sins with his blood,* Heb. i. 3. The thing whereby Christ came to be admitted *into the holy place, was the obtaining of eternal redemption for us,* Heb. ix. 12. The way that he came to partake of that privilege of *sitting down with his Father on his throne,* was by *overcoming* the difficulties of the work which he undertook, Rev. iii. 21.

3. *By his exaltation, he has the administration of things put into his hands, that he may bestow upon sinners that salvation, in order to which he suffered.* That he may put them into the possession of that glory which was the end of his undertaking. It is true that Jesus Christ entered upon his kingly power and office, as well as his other offices, from the first publishing of the covenant of grace, upon the fall of man. And Jesus Christ did in all ages execute that office, in governing the world, and bestowing salvation on the elect. But the *Scriptures* do plainly set forth that Christ has some *particular administration* put into his hands since his sufferings, Eph. i. 20, 21, 22. Since his resurrection, God has put all things under his feet, Phil. ii. 9. Speaking of the same time, he says, "God has given him a name above every name." Rev. i. 18. "I am he that liveth, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and death." The meaning of these Scriptures is, that since the exaltation of Christ, the administration of things is in the hands of the man Christ Jesus;

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the management of things is carried on by Christ as man. The Godhead is not excluded ; but Christ, as man, has an hand in the government of the world. *Christ*, in his *human nature*, will visibly manage the day of judgment. " God will judge the world by the man whom he hath ordained," Acts xvii. 31. And this administration is put into his hands, that he may bestow eternal life and salvation upon sinners, Acts v. 3. " Him hath God exalted with his right hand, to be a Prince and a Savior, to give repentance to Israel and remission of sins." And if God, presently upon the obedience and sufferings of Christ, has put such power into his hands, it is a clear evidence that he has fully paid for our salvation. If Christ had fallen short of purchasing our salvation, God would not have given him a commission to have bestowed it. God would have stood for full satisfaction. He would have objected, that it would have been against justice to have saved them. But now, Christ having fully paid the debt God exalts Christ to his own right hand, and *invests him with full authority* to bring them unto blessedness.

## CHAP. V.

*The* fifth *Argument, from the Promise of Salvation to all those that do believe in the Righteousness of CHRIST. The* sixth *Argument, from the Command of believing in CHRIST's Righteousness.*

Arg. V.

Arg. V. *THAT Righteousness which God by his promise in the Gospel does encourage us to trust in for our Salvation, it is safe to appear before God in.*

That righteousnes that God proposess to us, to place our confidence in, adding a promise of eternal life, we may safely appear before him in. That righteousness is unquestionably sufficient to purchase our salvation, and we may safely have our dependence upon it, as the price of eternal life; but *God does in the gospel encourage us by his promise to trust in the righteousness of Christ for salvation.* He has promised eternal life to all them in the gospel that do believe in the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

This I shall clear up unto you in these propositions,

Prop. I. *That the encouragement that God gives to those that believe in the righteousness of Jesus Christ, is, that they shall have eternal life.* Sometimes in the Scripture we find that they that believe shall have *their sins forgiven,* Acts x. 43. But we must not understand that they are only brought into a state of reconciliation at present, from which they may fall away again; that only their former sins are pardoned; so that if they should sin again, it is at their peril of eternal damnation: but the thing that the gospel encourages believers with the hopes of, is *salvation.* Sometimes it is expressed in more general terms, that they shall "not be confounded," 1 Pet. xii. 6. "They shall not be cast out," John vi. 37. Sometimes it is expressed, that they "shall not enter into condemnation," John v. 24. Sometimes positively;

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"That whosoever believeth on him, should not perish, but have everlasting life," John iii. 16.

Prop. II. *That God engages himself by promise to give believers eternal life.* He does not give them some uncertain encouragement of it; but binds himself by his *promise.* When God expresses himself in his word, "That he that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life," John iii. 36, and "that he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," Mark xvi. 16.; he does not manifest merely his *purposes,* though all God's purposes are irrevocable; neither are such expressions mere *declarations* of what God is frequently *wont to do,* as it is with many passages in the book of *Proverbs:* but they are *proper promises.* God himself calls them promises, 2 Tim. i. 1. "According to the promise of life by Jesus Christ." So Rom. iv. 16. Gal. iii. 22. And this is a part of the *covenant;* indeed the main part of it. God is bound by covenant to give life unto believers. And because Christ has purchased this and other blessings that God is by covenant engaged to bestow, he is called, "the Mediator of the new covenant," Heb. xii. 24. And hence it is a part of *faithfulness* to preserve believers unto glory, 1 Thes. v. 23, 24. The *faithfulness* of God stands bound unto believers, Heb. x. 2, 3.

Prop. III. *This promise of eternal life is made to those that believe on the righteousness of Christ.* Those that have their dependence upon the blood and redemption of Jesus Christ; all those that have their expectation from the righteousness of Christ, shall be saved, Rom. ii. 25. "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation

through faith in his blood." We must place our faith in the sufferings of Jesus Christ. This is what faith triumphs in as the matter of justification, Rom. viii. 34. "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died."

*Quest.* Here we may enquire, *What act of faith it is, that is the condition of the covenant of grace?*

*Ans.* 1. That act of faith that is the condition of the covenant, *is a relying upon God through Jesus Christ for salvation as offered in the gospel.* There are many acts of saving faith besides this. Faith respects the whole book of God; all the promises, threatenings, prophecies therein. By saving faith we believe the creation of the world, the general deluge, the coming of Christ in the flesh. But these actings of it are not the condition of the covenant. So likewise by faith we do depend upon Christ for *particular outward blessings;* but though that be a thing that does accompany salvation, yet it is not the condition of the covenant. But that act of faith which is the condition of the covenant, has those *four properties.*

*First, It is a relying upon God.* God is the *ultimate* object of faith. What Christ does in order to our salvation, he does as the messenger and servant of his Father. So that faith is to rest upon God. Therefore we are said to "come to God by Jesus Christ," Heb. vii. 25. God is the object of faith, both under the covenant of works and the covenant of grace. *Our faith and hope must be in God,* 1 Pet. i. 21.

*Secondly,*

*Secondly, It is a relying on God for salvation.* Though sometimes the thoughts are especially upon pardon of sin, but that is in order to salvation. But their faith does lay hold of God for salvation, Acts xvi. 30, 34. And that this is a property of that act of faith which is the condition of the covenant, appears from hence, because the offers of grace are proposed in that manner, that we believe for *pardon and salvation*; that is the great thing promised in the covenant, John iii. 14. And therefore, that is the great thing entertained by that faith which is the condition of the covenant.

*Thirdly, It is a relying upon God through Christ.* Christ is the *Mediator* that we must come *by*: he is the *great ordinance* that we must make use of. We must have our dependence on God through him. And therefore, when we accept of the call of the gospel, we are said to *believe in him, come to him, open to him, receive him*, John xxxv. 37. Rev. iii. 20. John i. 12. Sometimes we are said to *believe in his name*, John i. 12. There can be no entering into the covenant of grace, or performing the condition of it, without coming unto Christ. And therefore, in such places where Christ is not known, there is no salvation.

*Fourthly, It is a relying on him as offered in the gospel.*

2. The scripture does propose Christ to be believed on, *both as the purchaser and dispenser of salvation.* The word of God does propose him to be the object of faith, both as purchaser and dispenser of life. *He is made to us for wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption.* He is declared to be the *purchaser of salvation*,

*tion*, 1 Tim. ii. 6. "He has given himself a ransom for us." So he is declared to be the *dispenser of it*. "He has power over all flesh, to give eternal life to as many as God has given him," John xvii. 2. Christ is not a *Priest* only, but a *Prophet* and a *King* and our faith does not justify us, merely as it relies upon the blood and righteousness of Christ, which are the matter of our justification, but as it *entertains Jesus Christ*; for that is the *condition* of the covenant.

3. It cannot be proved from the word of God, *that a man can come to Christ for salvation without relying particularly upon his righteousness*. It will not be evinced from Scripture, that a man can close with Christ as a Saviour in general, and not distinctly *rest upon him* as having *satisfied the justice of God for us*; because the heart will not be satisfied in the safety of coming to Christ except he see a way how the *law is answered*. And therefore, God has taken care from the *beginning of the world* to make known the *sufferings* of Jesus Christ; and there was a continual *representation* of them in the *ancient church*. He that understands not the strictness of the law, cannot see the need of Christ; and he that understands not the sufferings of Christ, cannot see the safety that is in Christ for such who are under the sentence of so strict a law. There is one great *difficulty* in the way of receiving this *position, viz.* That the disciples of Christ, who were good men, and did believe in Christ, and professed that he had the words of eternal life, yet did not understand the sufferings of Christ. Mark ix. 31, 32. "He said to them, the Son of man is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill him, and after

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that he is killed, he shall rise again the third day, but they understood not that saying :" so Mat. xvi. 21, 22. And when he suffered it, made them question whether he was the *Messiah*, Luke xxiv. 21. But it is possible they might believe the *doctrine* of Christ's sufferings, and yet not understand either the *manner* of it, that it should be done by the priests and people of *Israel*; or not understand the *time* of it, being carried away with the vulgar error of the *Jews*, that the *Messiah* would set up a glorious worldly kingdom : but it is very hard to conceive, that they should be wholly ignorant of the signification of the sacrifices, and of the meaning of many prophecies of the *Old Testament* respecting this thing, 1 Pet. i. 11.

Prop. IV. The *promise to those that believe in Christ, is universal.* There be some indefinite promises, which are declarations of what God will do for some or many of his people ; and no particular saint can from thence conclude, that they shall be made good unto them ; but this promise is *universal*, hereby God absolutely binds himself to every believer to give him eternal life.

1. This appears, because the *words of universality* are added to the promise ; so that God becomes engaged to every believer. So the promise is sometimes expressed to all, Acts xiii. 39. " All that believe are justified." So Rom. iii. 22. And by *all*, we are not to understand, as sometimes, some of all sorts, but *all* and *every one*, for so it is expressed sometimes, John iii. 16. " Whosoever believeth on him shall have everlasting life." Acts x. 33. " Whosoever believeth on him shall have remis-

sion of sins." So that God engages himself to believers man by man. So he speaks to men particularly, "If any man hear my voice and open unto me, I will come in," &c. Rev. iii. 20.

2. *There is no limitation of this promise expressed in the whole Scriptures.* Sometimes there is some condition, that a promise is to be understood with, that is set down in some other place of Scripture, but there is not any thing expressed in the Scripture that does limit or restrain this promise; or confine it to some believers. In Mark xvi. 16. it is said, "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved." But being baptized, is no part of the condition of salvation, but is mentioned as a *fruit* and evidence of faith. That it is not a condition is plain: because in the threatening that is added, he does not say, that he that is not baptized shall be damned; *but he that believeth not.*

*Holiness* is not properly a condition of salvation: Such promises as make mention of holiness, do not make God's covenant with believers conditional. Holiness is no such condition as renders the salvation of believers unquestionable. Such promises as mention it, only shew the *order* and *way* wherein God will bestow salvation on believers. Holiness is a promised condition: God is engaged to give holiness to believers, 1 Thes. v. 22, 23. Holiness cannot be properly a condition, because, before his perseverance in holiness he is *justified;* that is, declared an heir of glory, Rom. v. 1. Therefore the condition is already fulfilled. God offers life to sinners upon the condition of believing: and the very mentioning of that condition is *exclusive of any other.*

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The invitation to believe, is sometimes directed to some particular sorts of sinners: As to those that are *thirsty*, Isaiah lv. 1. To those that *labour and are heavy laden*, Mat. xi. 28. But it is one thing for an invitation to be particularly applied to this or that sort of sinners; another thing for it to be confined unto them. The invitation is directed to *all sinners* that live under the gospel, except those that have committed the *unpardonable sin*. The promise is absolute to *all believers*, without any exception at all.

3. *There is no limitation of the promise to be understood.* There is no exception to be understood. Men need not fear that God has some *reservation* in his own breast: for no exception that is not fairly to be understood, can be of any force to avoid the performance of a promise. Nothing can be understood to contradict what is expressed. Besides God tells us that there is no exception, John vi. 37. "He that cometh unto me I will in nowise cast out."

Prop. V. *That the promise of eternal life is made to one act of believing on Jesus Christ.* It is not the *habit* but the *act* of faith, that the promise is made to. The promise under the covenant of works was not made to habitual holiness; and the promise under the covenant of grace is not made to habitual faith. As a woman's disposition to marry a man, does not give her a right to him or his estate, but the actual marrying of the man, so it is here: it is in a way of covenanting that we have an interest in the covenant of grace. The Scripture sets forth that faith that gives us right in the covenant of grace, by

by words that signify *actions*; as *coming to Christ, ope*
*ing to him, believing on him, and the like.* But it is o
act of believing that makes a man an heir of life. Go
offers eternal life on condition of one act of believing
When God says, "He that believeth shall be saved;
the meaning is not, that he that believeth as long as h
lives shall be saved, but he that performeth one act o
faith; one act of faith gives a man as real an interest in
Christ as a thousand. One act of covenanting makes up
the match: one act of closing with Christ makes a man
an heir of life. After acts of faith may evidence his title
to heaven, but it is the first act of faith that gives him his
title. God offers life to us in the gospel on this condition,
that we will *accept of it*, John v. 24. And it is unrea-
sonable to think, that the meaning of it is, if we ac-
cept of it an hundred or a thousand times, or as long as
we live; but the meaning is, if we do once accept of it:
and therefore, those that have accepted of it, are said *to*
*have eternal life*, 1 John v. 13.

This further appears,

1. *Because they that have performed one act of faith are already justified and adopted.* Their sins are presently pardoned on their coming to Christ. God does not suspend the act of justification, & wait to see whether they will continue to believe; but out of hand he issues out a pardon for them. *If called, then justified*, Rom. viii. 30. And these are presently adopted, John i. 12. And there is *no revoking of these acts.*

2. *When once men believe it is part of God's covenant to make them to continue to believe,* It cannot be properly

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the condition of the covenant; for it is a part of the mercy promised unto us when we come unto Christ: all the subsequent acts of faith are part of that salvation that God promises: And surely that which is due unto us by the covenant, cannot be properly the condition of the covenant: Continuance of faith is part of that *sanctification* which God has engaged to us, 1 Cor. i. 30.

3. *If God did not offer life upon condition of one act of believing, we should not have sufficient encouragement to perform one act of believing on Christ.* If God should say to a sinner, if you will accept of the offer of salvation, both now and hereafter, I will save you. What ground could the sinner have to believe? The sinner would readily say, How do I know that I shall believe hereafter? He could see no safety in such an offer. A presumptuous sinner that doated on his own strength, might venture on it: but a man that knows himself, could not find rest in such an offer; but now when he offers life to us, if we will now accept it, the soul can find encouragement enough there, Jer. iii. 22.

And since God has *promised* life unto *all* that *believe in the righteousness of Christ; it must needs be safe to appear before God in this righteousness.* We need no greater assurance of salvation than the promise of God: this is a sufficient security to believers, whatever unlikelihoods may appear to them, at any time, of their salvation. The *faithfulness* of God stands engaged, and this is a foundation of everlasting comfort. The witness of God gives greater assurance, than the testimony of all the men in the world: *If we believe the witness of men, the the witness of God is greater,* John v. 9. This we may securely

securely rejoice in: "The words of the Lord are pure words, as silver tried in a furnace of earth purified seven times," Psal. xii. 6. There is no deceit or fraud in God's promises: this is armour of proof against all temptation. 'His truth shall be thy shield and buckler," Psal. xci. 4. If our souls were a thousand times dearer to us than they are, we might quietly venture them on the *promise* of God. God has made a promise to us; has sent his servants to publish it in his name; has ordained the office of the *ministry* to witness it unto us from him: and surely he has not appointed them to go with a lie in their mouths.

God has not only *said* it, but given it us *under his hand*, left it upon *record*, to be a witness for us. "This is the record that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son," 1 John v. 11. And we may quietly rely on this: it is impossible that the promise of God should fail of its accomplishment. "God is faithful, 1 Thes. v. 23. "He is very faithful," Psal. cxix. 138. "His faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds," Psal. xxxvi. 5. "It endureth forever," Psal. cxvii. 2. God *cannot forget* his world. Sometimes the memories of men do not serve to keep their promises; things slip out of their remembrance; but God is not subject to any such infirmity. "He always minds his covenant," Psal. cxi. 5. His promises are all written on his heart, no tract of time can wear them out of his remembrance. "He has remembered his covenant forever, the word which he commanded to a thousand generations," Psal. cv. 8. God is *unchangeable*. Men are fickle and inconstant, in one mind to-day, and another to-morrow. Sometimes men change their minds out of mere fickleness, sometimes from

from the change of their condition, or divers appearances in providences; but God is not subject to any mutation. His purposes are more firm, than mountains of brass. He says, "repentance shall be hid from his eyes," Hos. xiii. 14. God is *perfectly holy*, and therefore cannot fail of his word. Men having a principle of sin in them, may be out-bid to neglect the fulfilling of their promises; but there is not the least spark of unholiness in God: holiness is his nature, Isai. vi. 3. Yea, such is the perfection of God's nature, that he is not liable to those *temptations* to speak false that men are. Men sometimes speak false out of *fear*: they fear the anger and contempt of men: but God fears none. Men sometimes speak false in hope of *gain*. *Jacob* lies to get the blessing; *Gehazi* to enrich himself: but God is not capable to gain any thing by the creature. Men sometimes speak false, that they may *appear better* than they are; but it is impossible that God should appear more gracious and glorious than he is. Men sometimes decline fulfilling of their promises, because it proves *difficult* to do it, or brings some unthought-of inconveniences upon them; but every thing is easy to God; every thing is known unto him before the foundation of the world. God having engaged salvation to believers, they may say as *David*, "Therefore we will not fear, though the earth be removed," &c. The *salvation of believers*, and the *honour of God's faithfulness* are embarked together; they must sink and swim together. Believers cannot fail of salvation, unless God fail of his glory; unless God's word fail, which is impossible, the salvation of believers cannot fail.

Arg. VI.

Arg. VI. *They that are* commanded *of God to believe in the righteousness of Christ, may safely appear before God in the righteousness of Christ; but we are commanded by God to believe in the Righteousness of Christ.*

Though the calls of the *gospel* are many times propounded in a way of *invitation*, they are set before us as gracious offers, wherein God is in a way of grace tendering a great benefit unto us; yet they have the force of *commands*.

I might argue the safety of coming unto Christ, from thence, that we are *invited* to come unto him for help. For surely, in those invitations, God does not go about to delude men, and lovingly draw them in, to take such a method for the salvation of their souls, as would fail them. It is not to be imagined, that the glorious God would with great seeming love to the souls of men, draw them into a *snare*, and with an appearance of good-will to them, advise them to take a course that were not safe. It is not to be thought that God would lovingly, and with a great deal of tenderness, persuade men to set their feet in slippery places, and build their hopes upon a sandy foundation. There is no such delusion in the gospel. He would not urge men with such compassion to put their trust in Christ, but that the welfare of their souls is secured thereby: they may, without fear, venture upon the counsels and entreaties of the Lord; being secure in that that God will not lead them into danger. When God advises us to trust in Christ, he commends this way to us a *way of safety*: for it is no *part of love* to advise us to put our confidence in a broken reed.

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But besides what may be argued this way, these *invitations* have in them the force of *commands*, and lay us under duty, in obedience unto God, to come unto Christ. As there is love in these calls, so there is authority also. We are not left at liberty, whether we will come to Christ or no, but are required to come. God does prescribe this way, and enforce it both by his love, and also his authority. God, that has put Jesus Christ into office, doth require us to receive him in all his offices, Psal. ii. 12. And, among other ways, to be *putting our trust in him.* Therefore this is called *the work of God*, John vi. 29. This is the great business that he has set us to do; and this is called *his commandment*, 1 John iii. 23.; which shews not only that it is commanded, but that this is the *special* commandment, that God lays *peculiar weight* upon. And hence it is a sin for men not to believe in Jesus Christ. This the Spirit *reproves for*, John xvi. 9, *of sin, because they believe not on me.* Hence God is angry with those that stay away from Christ, Luke xiv. 21.

This command of believing in Christ, is a *branch* of the *second commandment* in the law. By that command, it is required, that we should worship in that way he appoints; that we should attend such worship as is instituted by him, and not devised by man: and this is the great *institution* of God under the covenant of grace, that we worship him *by Jesus Christ*, seek to God through him, and believe in God through him. Jesus Christ is the great ordinance that God has set up to be worshipped by. Jesus Christ *as God*, is to be worshipped with divine worship, by virtue of the *first command*. Jesus

Christ as *Mediator*, is the means whereby we are to draw nigh to God, by virtue of the *second* command. As the sacrifices of old were a principal ordinance whereby God was to be worshipped; so Christ, who was typified by those sacrifices, was, and is the principal ordinance whereby fallen man is to draw nigh unto God, and *through whom* we are to believe in him.

And this *command* of God does *argue the safety of appearing in Christ's righteousness*; the command of God *does evidence our assured salvation in this way*. This would never have been commanded of God, if it were not safe.

And this appears by *three* things,

1. *If it be commanded, that we believe in Jesus Christ's righteousness, then it is lawful for us so to do.* God would never put us upon that, which in its own nature is not lawful. It must needs be a warrantable thing for us to put our trust in the righteousness of Christ: there can be no unlawfulness in attending to that which God requires: But, if it were not safe to appear in the righteousness of Christ, it could not be lawful to believe in it; it would be an irregular thing to put our trust therein. And that on *two accounts*,

(1.) *It would be a putting of too much honor upon Christ and his righteousness.* If it were not safe appearing in Christ's righteousness, then Christ's righteousness were not worthy to be believed in. If it were not safe trusting in it, then we should give too high a commendation to it, when we believe in it; for when we believe

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in it, we proclaim it to be safe so to do. It would be an idolizing of Christ's righteousness, to trust in it, if it were not safe so to do: It is a fault to believe in that which cannot save. When we believe in Christ's righteousness, we give him the honor of having purchased salvation for us: if it were not safe to trust in Christ's righteousness, then in so doing we should give him a glory that belongs not to him.

(2.) *It would be self-flattery for us to believe in the righteousness of Christ.* If it were not safe appearing in it, it could not be lawful to trust in it: to trust in it would be *presumption.* What would it be, but to delude ourselves, and to please ourselves with an idle dream, which would deceive us? Men are blamed in the word of God for such confidences, Isaiah xxix. 8. It is not lawful or warrantable for us to believe in that which we have not sufficient encouragement to believe in; but we have not sufficient encouragement to believe in the righteousness of Christ, if it be not safe to appear before God in it. What can encourage us to depend upon, and be satisfied in that, which it is *not safe* to depend upon?

2. If it be commanded that we believe on the righteousness of Christ, *then it is duty so to do:* Then we are *bound in conscience* to come unto Christ; we cannot *without sin* stay away from *Christ;* and therefore, surely it is safe to trust in the righteousness of Christ. The holy God would never make it our duty to trust in that which is not a sufficient ground of faith. It were an hard lesson, to be bound in conscience to do that, which we could not satisfy our consciences in doing. It were

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wildness for any man to imagine that God should command us to love that which is not lovely, or to mourn for that which is not a matter of sorrow, or to rejoice in that which is not a matter of joy. So it is to think that God should require us to *trust* in that which is *not a ground of confidence.* That would be very hard, for God to bind us to put our confidence in that which we could not put our confidence in, except we were out of our wits. If it were not safe to put our trust in Christ's righteousness, what could induce us to do it, except we were under a delusion? It is *against nature* for man to put confidence in any thing but under this notion, that there is ground of confidence in it. What persuasions can prevail to make men rest in that, which they could not safely rest upon? The Lord is a righteous God, and gives no such unequal command; all his commands are *righteous,* he requires but what is equal, Psal. cxix. 138.

3. If God commands us to believe on the righteousness of Jesus Christ, then *we must do it upon pain of damnation, if we fail thereof.* Every sin does by law deserve death: and the continuance in the neglect of any known command, does unavoidably bring death and ruin; and so the neglect of this command, John iii. 18. "He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." Certainly, then, it must be a safe thing to believe on Jesus Christ. If there be no safety in believing, there is no reason that we should be punished for not believing: if there be no safety in believing in Christ, then it is madness to believe in Christ; and will God punish us for not acting the part of madmen? It were

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an unreasonable thing for a man to believe in Christ, if it were not safe so to do; and therefore unreasonable that he should be punished for not doing of it. Will God damn men for not building their hopes for heaven upon the sand? Will God cast a man into hell, because he will not embrace a delusion, and put his confidence in a broken reed? The Lord is a righteous God and would never punish men for not believing, if they had not abundant encouragement to believe. The command of this holy God gives us great security in believing, John xii. 50. "I know that his command is life everlasting."

Object. Here it may be objected against this argument, *That we are commanded by God to believe for many things, and to believe in the righteousness of Christ, for them which we have no certain security that we shall enjoy in a way of believing: whatever we pray for, we must do it believing: and we must do it in the name of Christ: Thus we are to believe for health, for the conversion of all our children, for rain, and other public mercies. So that it is no hard or unreasonable thing, to be commanded to believe for that which is not sure in a way of believing; neither do we want sufficient encouragement to believe, though the thing we believe for be not sure to us in that way.*

Ans. *That act of faith* which is the *condition of the covenant of grace,* is *far differing* from *other acts of faith* that are required of us. We do believe for a mercy, when by a spirit of faith we take hold of any of those encouragements which God gives us, with respect to that mercy. That when we are encouraged by the power of God, the mercy of God, the love of God to us, indefi-

nite promises, the redemption of Christ,—to rely upon God with quietness for a *mercy*, with submission to his holy will; we do believe in God for that mercy. And this we have sufficient *encouragement* to do, though there be no *certainty* that we shall enjoy the mercy in that way. And this God may fairly command us, though he does not absolutely promise the mercy. But *that faith* which is the *condition of the covenant of grace*, does *much differ* from this; that is an accepting of Christ and salvation by him as offered to us, and a relying on him for it according to the promise of the gospel. That this is the faith that is required as the condition of the covenant of grace is evident; because it is called a *receiving of Christ*. Justifying faith is the receiving of the promise of the gospel; it is a relying upon God in Christ according to the invitations of the gospel. And God would never require us to accept of an offer, and rely upon him for it, if it were not safe so to do. How is it possible for any man to rely upon God for the making good of his offer, if it were not safe so to do?

## CHAP. VI.

*The* seventh *Argument, from the Spirit's assuring men of the truth of the Gospel. The* eighth *Argument, from God's bestowing the beginnings of Salvation on Believers, here in this world.*

Arg. VII. *THAT Righteousness which the Spirit of God convinces and assureth men, that they may safely appear*

*appear before God in; that they may safely appear in:* but *the Spirit of God does convince and assure men that they may safely appear before God in the Righteousness of Christ.*

That must needs be true which the Spirit convinces men to be true. Satan labours to shake men's belief of this, and raises doubts and questions in the heart about it, and from thence we may argue probably that it is true; but the spirit of God does persuade and convince men of the truth of it, and establishes the heart in it, and from thence may infallibly argue the truth of it.

In opening and clearing this argument, we may consider,

1. *That many men are convinced and assured, that it is safe appearing before God in the Righteousness of Christ.* There are some kind of persuasions about it in the hearts of many others, that are bottomed partly upon the testimony of men, partly upon the rationalness of the doctrine; and these persuasions may work some considerable effects on their hearts. But there are some that have a *thorough conviction* of it, whose hearts are truly satisfied in the truth of it.

This is evident,

(1.) *Because they do believe this.* The doctrine of the gospel is believed by many, Acts xv. 7. "That the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel and believe." There be some that do receive the testimony of Christ, John iii. 33. and by faith entertain the

the doctrine of salvation by his sufferings, though they be but few comparatively, Isaiah liii. 1.; and therefore they are assured of it. For that knowledge which we have of things by faith in God, is certain. That knowlege which we have of things by our believing the testimony of man, is fallible, and it leaves room for doubtings; but the knowledge that we have of things by our believing the *testimony of God* is *certain*, and as abundantly satisfying to the heart, as that which we have by the seeing of the eye, or by demonstration. The knowlege that we have by faith, is a knowlege at second hand. But God gives us sufficient assurance, that it is he that speaks, and that his testimony is true. Therefore, when men do believe, they are said to be persuaded, Heb. xi. 13. "They saw the promises afar off, and were persuaded of them." So they are said to know surely, John xvii. 8. "They have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me." So they are said to be sure, John vi. 69. "We believe and are sure that thou art the Christ."

(2.) *Because they believe on Christ, and venture their souls upon him.* 1 Tim. iii. 16. "Believed on in the world." 1 John v. 13. "I have written to you that believe on the Son of God." And this is the effect of their assurance, that it is safe appearing in Christ's righteousness. If they were not *convinced* of that, no arguments would persuade them to venture upon Christ. When men come to Christ, they come under that conviction, that it is safe coming unto him. The "gospel works effectually in them that believe," 1 Thes. ii. 13. Every one that comes to Christ "hath the witness in himself,"

himself," 1 John v. 10. This makes them come with boldness unto Christ, though there be many others that are afraid to come. If they were afraid of the truth of the gospel they would be afraid to come too, they would not dare to cast themselves on Christ. Before they were convinced, they withstood all arguments that could be used with them; they had their answers ready, and their excuses at hand; they had an unpersuadable spirit, somewhat to turn off all that could be said. And the reason that now they venture themselves on Christ is not any self-excellency, for they come to him when they are at worst, when they *see the plague of their own hearts*; but it is because they are convinced of the safety that is in Christ. "To them that believe Christ is precious," 1 Pet. ii 7.

(3.) *Because they have comfortable and gracious hopes of glory.* There be many flattering hopes of blessedness that ungodly men do entertain, that depend upon their vain conceits; but the people of God have a gracious hope of glory. And the hopes of the people of God do principally depend on the conviction of these *two* things,

*Scil. That there is safety in Christ's righteousness*; and then, *that they have an interest in it*, have received it. Their *faith* of dependence arises from the conviction of the *first*, but their *hope* arises from *both together*. It is true, that their hopes do rise from the belief of other promises of glory, together with a sight of the qualifications in themselves, that are mentioned in those promises. Thus saints have hope from those promises that are made to those that *love God*, that *mortify* sin, that *love the saints*, that are *patient* under afflictions, &c. yet the fundamental

damental promise of the gospel is that which is made to believing in Christ. And the hopes of Christians do principally arise from the conviction of Christ's righteousness, together with our interest therein. 1 Pet. i. 8. "Believing ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." Rom. xv. 13. "The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing."

2. *This conviction is not the fruit of men's natural reason.* Natural reason, though advantaged with external revelation, cannot satisfy the heart that it is safe to appear in the righteousness of Christ. Natural reason, may work some conviction of this truth, and discover so much of it that a man may come to look upon it as very rational and probable, but it cannot discover the certainty of it. *Flesh and blood cannot reveal that.* Natural reason may make such a discovery of this truth, that they may be urged in conscience to believe in Christ, and condemned in conscience for not believing in him; that they may think those happy that do believe in him; that they judge those grossly erroneous that do deny this doctrine. But yet it will not give such a conviction as can *assure* the soul that it is so indeed. Men are apt to think that they are satisfied that there is safety in relying on the righteousness of Christ; only they question whether God does call them, as the case is circumstanced with them, to rely upon him; but they delude themselves. Man's reason does not discover the certainty of this truth by all the helps that the world does afford: yea, though they do partake of some inward common illumination. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know

know them, because they are spiritually discerned," 1 Cor. ii. 14. There is a *twofold defect* in natural reason that hinders men from receiving of this truth.

(1.) *Natural reason cannot apprehend that God can find in his heart to save sinners on the account of Christ's righteousness.* When men come to be enlightened, and have a sense of sin, and wrath of God, it will not enter into them, that *God* can be free to forgive them, and save them on the account of Christ's blood. They are strangers unto the merciful nature of God, and hence are seeking to get some worthiness of their own to pacify God with; and cannot conceive that God is willing to pardon them, who are so unworthy, except they were somewhat better. They think they must have something to commend them to God. They think it would be madness for them, as bad as they are, to venture on Christ's blood. 1 Cor. i. 18. "The preaching of the cross is to them that perish, foolishness." They have strange and low thoughts of the mercy of God, Isaiah lv. 8.

(2.) *Natural reason will not make men believe God's testimony.* Natural reason will not beget faith. Natural men are in Scripture described to be unbelievers, John v. 46. Natural reason will not lay weight *on the testimony of God.* No man will receive God's testimony, and act faith thereupon, until he knows God. *Paul* says, "I know him whom I have believed," 2 Tim. i. 12. And every man must know God before he will believe him. Many men do entertain some of the things that God says; so the devils believe and tremble. But those persuasions rise from the convictions of reason, and not

from

from *faith* in God's word. No man will receive any thing merely on God's testimony, until he know him. And therefore will not be assured of that which he can know no other way but by faith, and which carnal reason has many objections against.

3. *The conviction of this truth is by the Spirit of God.* It is the work of God's Spirit to satisfy the heart in this, that it is safe appearing in the righteousness of Christ. God does create light in the mind to discover this. The outward call of the gospel presents the object before men, and the work of the Spirit is to give men eyes to see the truth of it. Men's natural reason makes them understand the *sense* of the proposition; and the spirit of God puts a new light in them, whereby they understand the *truth* of the proposition. Their persuasion about this is the fruit of divine instruction.

This I shall shew from several *texts* of Scripture. John xvi. 7, 8. "The Comforter will reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment." In this text, for the clearing of what is before us, we shall take notice of three things,

(1.) That the *comforter* here is *the Spirit of God.* This is clear, not only because he was a person sent to assist in and succeed the ministry of the apostles; but also because he is called "the Spirit of truth," John xiv. 16, 17. "He shall give you another comforter, even the spirit of truth."

(2.) That the *work* of the Spirit here is *conviction.* So it is in the *margin*; the word signifies, to convince by

by *argument* and *reason*: and here is the argument that the Spirit shall convince by, ver. 10. "Because I go to my Father and ye see me no more." So the word is used, John viii. 9. 1 Cor. xiv. 24.

(3.) That the *thing* that the Spirit does convince of, is *our safety in Christ's righteousness*. It is *his* righteousness that he speaks of: for his going to the Father is the argument of it; and it is the sufficiency of his righteousness to our salvation.

This is clear by *two* things,

*Frist*, Because the spirit is promised to *confirm* the *doctrine* of the *apostles*.

And then, *Secondly*, Because the *argument* mentioned, *verse* 10. does *confirm this truth*. Christ's ascension to the right hand of God shews, that he has performed the work he came for, and *wrought a perfect righteousness*.

John vi. 45. "Every man therefore that hath heard and hath learned of the Father cometh unto me." The meaning of this is not, that all that were godly among the Jews, that had been taught of God, should acknowledge Jesus of *Nazareth*, and depend on him. This is indeed a truth, that upon the setting of convincing light before them they would do it: So did *Nathaniel*, John i. 49. the *Eunuch*, Acts viii. 37. *Cornelius* and *Lydia*. This is not the meaning; for when he says, "every one that hath heard and learned of the Father," he means every one that has been taught by God the doctrine of the

New Testament; and he speaks of such teaching as did immediately draw men to Christ. But the meaning is, that they who have been taught the gospel by God, will believe on Christ. So that this is clear from hence, it is *the work of God* to encourage men to come to Christ. And God encourages men by satisfying their hearts in the safety that is in the righteousness of Christ. That persuasion that draws men to Christ is wrought by God.

Rom viii. 30. "And whom he called, them he also justified." By this Scripture it appears that it is *God's work* to satisfy the heart in the safety of coming to Christ. When he says, that they are *called* of God, he means they are *inwardly* called of God. He intends not the outward call, because he speaks of it as a proper effect of *predestination*, and certain forerunner of *justification*. And this *inward call* is nothing else but the *enlightening* of the mind to see the truth and certainty of the outward call. So that those arguments which God sets before us in his word to persuade us to come to Christ, those he satisfies our hearts in, by the inward work of his Spirit. By his Spirit he sets home the precepts, invitations and promises of the gospel. This inward call is that which sastisfies the heart; so that it answers the call of God.

Object. 1. *It seems not to be the work of the Spirit to convince men that they may safely appear in Christ's righteousness; because after they have been convinced, they doubt again, and call it in question whether they may venture on the righteousness of Christ.*

*Ans.* We may well argue, that *if they have been convinced*

*ed thoroughly by the Spirit, they will never be utterly carried away with unbelief to reject this truth:* but we *cannot conclude they would never doubt.* Men may call those things in question which they have learned by the Spirit of God. So the *prophet* did, 1 Kings xiii. 17, 18, 19. Yea, men may question things that they have been taught by the saving work of the Spirit. God revealed it to the disciples, that Jesus was the son of God, Mat. xvi. 16, 17. yet afterwards they questioned it, Luke xxiv. 21. they say, "We verily thought it had been he that should have redeemed Israel." The *Psalmist,* no doubt, had been convinced, that God is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him; and yet afterwards, he had such workings of heart as these, "Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain," Psal. lxxiii. 13. And it is no wonder; for the *blindness* of the mind is but in part removed, and sometimes they have not the exercise of that light which is in them. The Devil is busy to throw scruples and objections into their hearts; and they have several principles in themselves that lead them to doubt those things that God has convinced them of: they have a principle of unbelief, carnal reason and enmity to the truth, so that it is no wonder that they have doubts about it.

Object. 2. *If men were convinced by the Spirit, they would have more understanding than many of them have of this way of salvation: many of them understand very little of the consistency of this way of salvation with the law of God; how the sufferings of one could answer for so many; there are many objections that they do not see through.*

*Ans.*

*Ans.* Every one that is taught of the Spirit, *has so much knowledge in this way of life, as is a foundation for faith.* He must have so much knowledge, as that his conscience may be satisfied in the truth of it. It is also true, that the teachings of the Spirit do *clarify* men's understandings: they come hereby to have clear conceptions of gospel truths: but men may be taught by the Spirit, and yet be very unable to give a resolution of many *objections.* The disciples were taught of God, that Jesus was the Son of God, Mat. xvi. 17. and yet knew not what to say to that objection, "that Elias must first come," Mat. xvii. 19. Though a Christian cannot answer many objections about the sufficiency of Christ's righteousness, yet he knows that, that will satisfy his heart that it is sufficient; namely, that God gives this testimony to it, and invites him to venture upon it.

4. Consider, in *what way* the Spirit of God works this conviction and assurance; and that is by a *spiritual illumination of the mind.* The Spirit of God is not wont, in *adult* persons, to reveal this doctrine in any extraordinary way; he works this conviction in such adult persons only as have the knowlege of the doctrine by hearing and reading of the word. Men must not expect to be taught that in a *miraculous* way, which they may learn in an ordinary way: neither would this be sufficient to work a thorough conviction and assurance of it: a man may have things revealed unto him *extraordinarily* by God, that has no faith; as *Balaam.* Neither does the Spirit assure men of this in a way of *testimony.* The Spirit of God is wont to testify and witness some things to the souls of the saints. "The Spirit itself beareth

witness

witness wi h our spirits, that we are the children of God," Rom. viii. 16. But he does not in that way reveal unto men the truth of the doctrine of the gospel; but he *openeth our eyes* to see the truth of it. The Spirit gives us eyes to see, and also the actual understanding of the truth of the gospel. He puts a principle of spiritual understanding into us by a work of creation. "Ye were sometime darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord," Eph. v. 8. He also assists us actually to discern the truth of this way of salvation by Christ: while the soul is hearing, reading, and meditating of it, he puts a light into him, discovering it to be true. And, sometimes while the soul is thinking of his misery, the Spirit brings to remembrance some word, and with that puts a light into the soul, that satisfies the heart in the truth of the gospel. And this is wrought these *three* ways.

(1.) *The Spirit helps us to see the truth of this in the testimony of God in his word.* It is not any inward testimony that our faith depends upon; but the testimony of God in his word, and the inward work of the Spirit, is to help us to receive the *sure word of prophecy;* and depend upon that. God witnesses in his word plentifully to that, that there is salvation wrought out for us by Christ, that he has redeemed us, purged away our sins, brought in everlasting righteousness. And in this testimony of God we see the truth of the thing itself; the Spirit satisfies the heart, and clears it up to him, that this is God's testimony, that it is no deceit, that it is not any device or forgery of man, under a pretence of God's testimony; but that this is the very word of God. The word comes in God's name, and has many *characters* of

divine authority in it; and the soul is satisfied that it is God's word, 1 Thes. ii. 13 "Ye received it not as the word of men, but (as it is in truth) the word of God." The Spirit also satisfies the heart in the *faithfulness* of God. Naturally men have no assurance of the faithfulness of God, though they profess it; but the Spirit convinces the soul, that the Lord is a God of truth. "I know him whom I have believed," 2 Tim. i. 12. He does, with *Sarah*, judge him faithful that has promised. And here, though his soul be precious to him, yet he can quietly venture it upon his word.

(2.) *The Spirit helps us to see the certainty of this, in a way of reasoning from other principles which we do undoubtedly receive.* There is an assurance by arguing from such things as we are certain of. This is called "the demonstration of the Spirit," 1 Cor. ii. 4. When once a man is principled in that foundation, that the testimony of God in his word is certain and infallible; then he is assured of such *principles* as *these*, That Jesus Christ, who was our surety, is exalted to the right hand of God; that sinners are invited to rely upon the blood of Christ; that Christ has fulfilled the righteousness of the law for us. For these things are plainly laid down in the word of God. He had the notion of these things before, but now he is assured of them; and being assured of them, God helps him to argue from them the infallible certainty of salvation by Christ's righteousness. John xvi. 10. "The Spirit convinces of righteousness because I go to my Father." So a Christian sometimes after he is come to Christ, finds by experience in that way, the sanctifying and comforting presence of God with

him

him: and from hence he argues, and is more established in the doctrine of salvation by Christ.

(3.) *The Spirit helps to see the glorious excellency of God and Jesus Christ;* and thereby the great objections of his heart do vanish away, and fall of their own accord. There are some less objections which arise from want of distinct knowlege, and from a misunderstanding of some places of scripture, which, though they prove temptations, yet do not wholly hinder the workings of faith: But the main objections in the heart were, that God could not find in his heart to pardon such sins as they have been guilty of, and that the law threatens them with ruin. But the Spirit discovers unto the soul the excellency of God and Christ, the riches of God's grace, and the preciousness of the righteousness of Christ; and then those objections fall, Psal. xxxvi. 7. "How excellent is thy loving kindness, O Lord! therefore the sons of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings." John xvii. 3. "This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent."

5. Consider, That this is *a great work* of God's Spirit, to convince men, and assure them that it is safe appearing in the righteousness of Christ. It is a matter of exceeding *great difficulty* to give entertainment unto this truth; and hence it is, that many men are never satisfied in it *all their days*; they continue all their lives long under the means of grace, and yet never come unto the knowlege of this truth; and many others whom God has persuaded of it, have been long before they were satisfied; though

though they have been full of inward troubles and fears, and thereby put upon it to be inquisitive into the way of salvation, yet were long before they came to Christ; their hearts were unsatisfied about their safety in so doing: and after prevailing and clear conviction, doubts are ever and anon arising in their hearts. And this difficulty must needs be very great, considering these things,

(1.) That *man* in his natural state is *an enemy to this way of salvation.* As man is an enemy to the *law* of God, so to the *gospel* of Jesus Christ. The heart does not like this way of salvation: man had rather be saved in another way. Man is *proud,* and cannot endure to go a-begging, and be beholden to the free grace of God for his salvation. He had rather earn it himself, than take it as a gift of God. Hence, men set their wits on work to descry another way that is more suitable to their honor and to find exceptions against this way of salvation by Christ. He does not like the method and so is inventing of cavils to turn off the calls of God.

(2.) *That man is ignorant of the gracious nature of God.* Men do not understand how merciful God is, are apt to measure the compassions of God by their own; and make a judgment of God by themselves. Hence they are full of *carnal reasonings* against this way of life. They think it is a great deal more probable, that they should be accepted on the account of some *worthiness in themselves.* They think it utterly unlikely that God should accept of them, till their hearts are better: they think it would be desperate presumption to venture upon Christ before they are better: they think that God is so angry with them, that he cannot find in his heart to pardon them. They take notice of the severity

verity of God upon others, and conceive of him as very difficult to pardon; they imagine there must be something considerable in them to commend them to God, and draw the heart of God unto them.

(3.) *The Devil is busy to hinder men from entertaining this truth.* The Devil is most industrious in this matter, because their entertaining this truth, will deliver them from his dominion, 2 Cor. xi. 3. He is possessing of men with *prejudices* against this truth, casting in objections, and fortifying the heart against the persuasions of the word: And this does considerably increase the difficulty, because of the subtilty of Satan to represent his temptations with great appearance of reason, and smooth a delusion so, that it shall have a great face of truth; and because of his ability, together with his reasonings to work so upon the affections, as to make the soul more opposite to the entertaining of the truth.

(4.) *Man by nature does not believe the testimony of God.* This truth cannot certainly be known but by faith. Reason may argue something for it, but not conclusively. But natural men are destitute of a principle to receive the testimony of God: they are ignorant of the glorious nature of God, and so of his faithfulness; and therefore, though they may look on it as a thing probable, because of God's testimony, having heard a fame of him, yet they cannot be assured of it upon his word, since they know him not: so that it is *a great and wonderful work* of God's *Spirit* to help men over all these difficulties, and convince them that it is safe appearing in the righteousness of Christ.

6. Consider,

6. Consider, The *evidence* that this work of the Spirit *gives in to the truth before us.* And we may plainly gather from hence, that it is safe appearing in Christ's righteousness. For,

(1.) *The Spirit of God is holy,* and cannot deceive or elude us; it is inconsistent with the *spotless purity* of the Spirit of God to convince us of that which is not true. Who can imagine that the holy Spirit of God would take pains with men, and work a miraculous change in them, to make them believe a lie? Why does God busy himself so in this work, but that it is of everlasting concernment unto the souls of men? It is true, that God may judicially blind men by withdrawing light from them, but he never goes about to persuade men of a lie. Would God persuade men to cast themselves upon Christ, if there were not safety in so doing?

(2.) We are commanded *not to quench the Spirit,* 1 Thes. v. 19. We must cherish the motions, and entertain the convictions of the Spirit; which certainly would not be our duty, *if the spirit did convince of any thing that is not true.* We are not bound to receive delusions, but by all means to be opposing and resisting of them; it cannot be our duty to entertain falsehoods, and give way to deceits; and therefore those convictions which we are bound to cherish, are certainly true.

I might also *argue* from the *manner* of the Spirit's convincing, which is by *enlightening,* and *opening of the eyes.* But if this which he convinces us of were not true, the conviction would be by blinding of us, and putting out our eyes. Where one by sophistical reasonings does

persuade

persuade another of a falsehood, makes him believe a lie; he does it by darkening his understanding: the opening of the eyes is not the way to lead men into error.

Arg. VIII. *That righteousness, upon the account of which God bestows the beginnings of salvation here, it is safe to appear before God in: But upon the account of Christ's righteousness, God bestows the beginnings of salvation here.*

There are some *degrees* of *salvation* which God bestows upon believers here, upon the account of his righteousness; they have an inchoation of salvation already. God begins to fulfil his promise presently, Tit. iii. 5. 2 Tim. i. 9. they are justified already, Acts iii. 39. "All that believe are justified:" they are adopted, John i. 12. "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:" they are saved from the curse of the law as to outward dispensations, Rom. viii. 28. "All things shall work together for good to them that love God, that are called according to his purpose."

But I shall only urge *two* things wherein the people of God have experience of the beginning of salvation, and therein an evidence of their full salvation by Jesus Christ in due time: namely, *sanctification* and *inward comfort.*

1. The people of God are *sanctified* in a way of *believing on the Righteousness of Christ.* They that do believe in Christ are sanctified; they do lead an holy life, dying unto sin, and living unto righteousness. They are delivered from the servitude unto sin, and do become servants

vants of God. Indeed this cannot be made evident by experience to the world, because the world cannot certainly know, that those that profess faith in Christ, have it in reality ; nor that those that seem to live an holy life, do so indeed ; yet there is that which falls under the *observation* of the world, that may considerably help forward their satisfaction in this particular.

1. Among those that do profess to believe in Christ, there are many that live in such a manner, that *there is not evidence that they are not sanctified.* It is not so with all those that profess to believe in Christ : there are many that make such a profession, that have no faith ; and therefore it is no wonder if they be not sanctified. But there be many, in whose lives there is no evidence that they are destitute of holiness : no man can justly charge them with living in any known sin, with any unmortified corruption, or acting from a corrupt principle in religion ; but this cannot be said concerning others that do not make this profession. Moral men among the *Heathens, Turks* or *Jews,* there are few or none of them, but would make it evident to a man of a discerning spirit, that was familiarly acquainted with them, that they were under the rule and power of some *lust.*

2. Among those that profess to believe in Christ, there are *many men in whom there are very speaking evidences that they lead an holy life.* They do not only walk inoffensively in their conversation, but there is a great deal of the breathings of a spirit of holiness in them ; their carriage savours of the *fear* of God, *love* to God, *submission* to the will of God, *care* for *the advancement of the glory,*

*glory* of God: their carriage has a great relish of piety and holiness: there is as much appearance of holiness as can ordinarily be expected from men that have still a principle of corruption remaining in them.

3. *Many of those who have formerly lived a corrupt life, when once they are in appearance brought home to Christ, do give great evidences of an holy life.* Many that live among the people of God do live very corruptly; but when once such men come to embrace the gospel in appearance, many of them do become very exemplary in holiness, cast off all their former ways of sin, and live an humble, spiritual, obedient life, as far as man can judge.

But there are *two* ways whereby the truth of this is evident above exception.

*One*, is by the *testimony of God's word.* The Scripture does commonly give the title of Saints unto believers. Hence that title of Saints in Christ Jesus is given to the *church at Philippi*, Phil. i. 1. So they are called holy brethren, that are partakers of the heavenly calling, Heb. iii. 1. And *saints*, and *faithful in Christ Jesus*, are used as terms equivalent, Eph. i. 1. All those that are implanted into Christ, do crucify their corruptions, Gal. v. 24. Hence good works are a demonstration of the truth of faith, Jam. ii. 18.

*Another* way whereby it is made evident, is by *the experience of many saints.* Hereby it is made evident to them, though not unto the world: every believer has experience of a great change in himself, though they have many fears whether it be indeed a life of holiness that

they live; it is exercising unto them whether they go beyond hypocrites, and are acted by any higher principles than self-love and conscience. Yet there be several that at times do *evidently see* a spirit of holiness working in themselves; so that their *consciences do bear witness* that they are the children of God. Besides what they do perceive of a daily *bent of heart* to keep God's commands, there are at times more visible and *sensible actings of grace*. There are at times when the strings are wound up to the height, when grace breaks forth as the light, and the heart is satisfied in that, that he has a spirit of holiness. John xxi. 17. "Lord thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee." Psal. xviii. 23. "I was also upright before him."

And this *sanctification* which the people of God have, *they have in a way of believing*. Some take sanctification so largely, as to comprehend the work of regeneration, and count regeneration also an effect of closing with Christ. But I will not now discuss that controversy; though there is no doubt but regeneration is the fruit of Christ's purchase. But I take *sanctification* for that *work of God's Spirit, whereby he does more and more purge away the remainders of sin, and carry on the work of holiness* in the hearts of his people; and this is the fruit of faith in Christ. Acts xxvi. 18. "They are sanctified by faith that is in me." Gal. ii. 20. "I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." And this sanctification comes from Christ's purchase; he has, by his death, redeemed us from the power of sin. Tit. ii. 4. "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to himself a

peculiar

peculiar people, zealous of good works." So John xvii. 1 Pet. i. 18, 19. Heb. ix. 14.

2. The people of God have *inward spiritual comfort* in a way of believing in the righteousness of Christ. It is very true, that many men that do not profess the true religion, and many others, that though they do profess the true religion, yet do not in sincerity embrace it, have much inward comfort under an expectation of blessedness hereafter. But the people of God that do believe in Jesus Christ, have inward comfort in that way *peculiar to themselves.*

Which we may consider under these *two* heads, of *peace of conscience,* and *communion with God.*

1. The people of God in a way of believing, *have peace of conscience.* And this is not a particular privilege of some believers, but a blessing that all do in some degree partake of. Those men that before their coming to Christ, were under the terrors of an evil conscience, conscience was terrifying of them, and binding them over to eternal judgment; do, upon their closing with Christ, enjoy a tranquillity of mind, and inward peace.

Indeed this peace may be *interrupted* and *disturbed,* because of darkness and temptations, and because conscience is but in part sanctified. But they are not brought back to take up such conclusions against themselves as before their closing with Christ, but commonly they do enjoy some comfortable serenity of heart; "have the answer of a good conscience by the resurrection of Christ," 1 Pet. iii. 21. This comes to pass by these *two* things.

1. When

1. When a soul comes to Christ, the *soul is satisfied that there is peace with God* to be obtained in a way of coming to Christ, that there is safety in coming to Christ. The inward call of the gospel satisfies the soul that there is salvation in Christ for all that come to him. Conscience is thereby well satisfied in the sufficiency of Christ, the freeness and the fulness of the grace of God, 1 Pet. ii. 7. " to him that believes, Christ is precious :" the objections of the heart are removed by the convincing work of the Spirit.

2. The *first act of closing with Christ is not so insensibly done, but that he does take some notice of it.* Some after acts of faith may be more plain, and in continuance of time the soul may lose the exact knowlege of the time of his first closing with *Christ,* and the circumstances of it ; but this first closing with Christ is not so secret a thing, but that it falls under the observation of conscience, Jer. iii. 22.

This is clear,

For, [1.] The *act itself is very observable.* When the soul comes at first to close with Christ, there is a mighty change wrought in it ; it is a thing quite contrary to what he has been doing ; he has been reasoning against it, making objections, standing out against all the pleadings of God with him ; but now when he closes with Christ, he lets fall all his objections, and gives entertainment unto Christ. Before, he despised him ; now, he prizes him : before, arguments did not sink into him, now they do, now he makes Christ welcome. This is exceeding remarkable, easy to be observed. This carriage of the

soul

soul is set forth in Scripture, by *opening to* Christ, *coming to him, marrying* of him, and is so contrary to his carriage immediatly before, that it is of easy observation.

[2.] There *is a great ability in conscience to take notice of the more secret stirrings of the heart.* Conscience has a wonderful quick eye; conscience is a curious observer of men's actions, Rom. ii. 15. The conscience takes notice of the secret windings and turnings of the heart; the desires, the ends, thoughts that pass through him, Heb. iv. 12. By the "help of the word," conscience makes "discovery of the secret thoughts and intents of the heart:" there is a wonderful sharp-sightedness in conscience to discover the carriage of the heart.

[3.] *Conscience, at this time, is more than ordinary exact in taking notice of the carriage of the heart.* At other times conscience will take notice of small things, but at this time conscience does most carefully observe what is done; for conscience is now in a restless condition; it is a matter of life and death how he carries now under the call of the gospel. Conscience takes more notice of this than of hundreds of other things; this is a thing that his salvation depends upon. Conscience has been pursuing of the sinner a great while, telling of him that if he would not close with Christ, he was undone, and must burn in hell forever. He has been neglecting to hearken to conscience, and conscience has given him no rest; now when he comes to do the thing that conscience has been so long urging him unto, *conscience will take special notice of that;* conscience will watch like *Benhadad's* servants, 1 Kings xx. 33. as a man would much ob-

serve it, when he had completed a disign that he had been labouring in many years.

2. The people of God in a way of believing *have comfortable communion with God.* There is a *state* of communion with God, whereby a believer has a standing interest in the favour, power, wisdom of God, and the righteousness of Christ, and in all his offices; but, besides this, there is an *actual communion* with God, which is sometimes more insensible, sometimes more sensible. Sometimes the people of God do enjoy glorious actual communion *with* God in this world: this is one of those enjoyments that man fell from by his sin, and no man in his natural estate does enjoy. A carnal man may have many internal discoveries of God, and be mightily affected therewith, but they do not properly enjoy any communion with him; but the people of God do, 1 John i. 3. "Our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ:" the fulness of this is reserved in heaven, but there is an inchoation of it here. God had communion with *Abraham* and others of old, in a visible appearance, and now has communion with his saints, though in a more *spiritual manner.*

And there are *four* particular ways of it, that I shall mention.

1. By *discovering his own glorious nature to them.* Sometimes God breaks out of the clouds, and makes a discovery of his own glory to the soul. He has promised to the *pure in heart that they shall see God.* And sometimes he does cause his glory to pass before the soul. Sometimes God makes a special discovery of *one*

of

of his *attributes*, and sometimes of *another*; of his sovereignty, holiness, mercy, faithfulness, Job xlii. 5, 6. "Now mine eye seeth thee." 2 Cor. iii. 18. "We all with open face behold as in a glass the glory of the Lord." Hereby men come to know God; other men have notions of God, but a saint *knows* him.

And there are *two effects* of these discoveries.

*One*, is a *drawing out of the actings of grace*, they put new life into the soul; they are very quickening and powerful on the heart.

The *other* is, that *they enkindle a desire to know more of God*. They make the soul long after further acquaintance with God, "to see his power and glory, as they have seen him in the sanctuary," Psal. lxiii. 3.

2. By *revealing of Christ and gospel-grace unto the soul*. God does not only at first conversion, but many times after, make a discovery of Christ to the soul; the Lord shews the soul the safety of this way of salvation; saints long for this, Phil. iii. 10. "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection." And God is at times gratifying them. Christ is opening this mystery of the gospel unto them. The Lord draws nigh and holds forth the sceptre of mercy, the acceptableness of his sacrifice, the freeness of his grace, the wonderfulness of his love, the certainty of salvation in a way of believing. And these discoveries that the Lord makes of the gospel, do answer all the *objections* of the heart, that though the soul was before in an unbelieving frame, he has power to resist no longer. These discoveries make

Christ

Christ very precious, he esteems him as one that does indeed save from sin and wrath. These discoveries make the soul contented with Christ. He sees he needs nothing but this righteousness to carry before God. He has done looking out elsewhere for help, yea he takes delight in this way of salvation, it is a way that pleases, he counts it glorious, 1 Tim. i. 11.

3. By *promises of particular mercies.* God does draw nigh to some of his people, and by his Spirit make known unto them that he will bestow some particular mercy upon them. Thus he sometimes promises assistance in their works, recovery from sickness, public deliverance. Of old, God has sometimes by the Prophets made particular promises to wicked men, as to *Ahab* and *Jehu.* Whether he does any such thing by his Spirit, now, to those that are carnal men, is not so certain: but undoubtedly he does to *some saints;* and that in answer to their prayers: when they have been begging a mercy of God, he by some promise gives assurance to the soul, that the request shall be fulfilled.

4. By *witnessing his love to the soul.* God does not only help the soul to gather it by consequence, but God by his Spirit does evidence the same to the soul. That he may quicken the heart in holiness, and that he may help the soul under temptations and sinking discouragements, or arm him against some special conflicts; he gives *witness* to his good estate, Gen vii. 1. This differs much from those tastes that hypocrites may have; wherein they have some sense of the sweetness that is in promises: for this is by way of testimony; yea, the Spirit does

make

make it manifest at that time that it is his testimony; and hereby this differs from the delusions of Satan. As the Prophets knew it to be the Lord that revealed things unto them: so saints at the time knew it to be the Spirit of God that witnessed to them; they do not need any other help at that time to know it to be the voice of God; they do not need a candle to see the sun; though, after, they may have doubts.

Thus I have cleared up the *assumption* of the argument. It remains that somewhat be added to evidence the *proposition*, that it must needs be safe appearing in that righteousness, upon the account of which God does bestow the beginnings of salvation here.

And I may evidence that, from these *two principles*.

The *first* principle is, *That righteousness which does purchase any part of the good of the covenant, does purchase the whole good of the covenant.* By the righteousness of Christ, believers stand already possessed of some part of the good of the covenant; and that righteousness that brought them into the possession of that, will in due time bring them into the possession of what remains: for that which purchases any part of the good of the covenant, must needs purchase the whole. The condition upon which all the good of the covenant depends was *one*, so that the good of the covenant must be wholly purchased or wholly forfeited. It could not be in part purchased, and in part forfeited. The *condition* of the *covenant of works*, was *perfect righteousness*; if that were performed, all the good of the covenant was purchased; if that were not performed, all the good of the covenant was forfeited;

forfeited ; an imperfect righteousness would not purchase any one good thing mentioned in the covenant. One sin was sufficient to break the whole covenant, and expose unto death ; one sin would make a course of righteousness for many years utterly ineffectual unto the purchase of any good, and lay the sinner open unto the curse of the law, Gal. iii. 10. Rom. vi. 23. Whatever was done towards the performance of the condition of the covenant, signified nothing, except the full was performed that God required. So the *condition* of the *covenant* of the *Mediator* was *perfect obedience* to the law of the Mediator, viz. perfect obedience to the commands of the law, and perfect bearing of the curse. It is true, that the *active* and *passive* obedience of Christ have a distinct respect, one of them to the possession of good, the other to the removal of evil ; the one is meritorious, the other satisfactory ; one procures the blessings promised, the other delivers from the evils threatened. But yet Christ being made under such a covenant, the success of one depended upon the other, and they are *jointly together* the purchasing cause of our salvation. And one of them would have had no efficacy at all towards our salvation, if not accompanied with the other. So that this principle stands firm, that that righteousness that does not procure all the good of the covenant, procures none. That righteousness can purchase no good for us, that is not sufficient for our complete salvation. That cannot purchase the beginnings of salvation, that does not justify us. Seeing, therefore, on the account of Christ's righteousness, we have already the beginnings of salvation ; that righteousness is sufficient for our justification and salvation.

The

The *second* principle is, That *God* in giving the beginnings of salvation in a way of believing in Christ's righteousness for salvation, *does own that to be the way of salvation.* God does in this way give such mercies as are evidences of his favor, and *such as do accompany salvation.* He subdues sin, quickens the heart in holiness, reveals his loving-kindness, &c.

And herein God does plainly testify, that this is the way to salvation; *and that the righteousness of Christ was the procuring cause of salvation.* If the righteousness of Christ were not sufficient for our salvation, God would be angry with us for believing in Christ's righteousness; we might expect frowns and judgments in this way. But God's giving the beginnings of salvation in this way, does eminently own it to be the way of life. When did God in such a way own men in a way of depending upon their own righteousness or external privileges? They have some common mercies, but none of the beginnings of salvation. But the beginnings of salvation being bestowed in this way, are an evident sign of divine approbation of it. God bore witness to the Apostle's preaching this doctrine "by many wonderful signs," Heb. ii. 4. And he bears witness to those that by faith receive this doctrine, by wonderful gracious effects in them; he gives the *earnest* of heavenly glory, which evidently shews the efficacy of this righteousness which they trust in to accomplish their salvation, Eph. i. 13, 14. "In whom after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory."

## CHAP. VII.

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*The* ninth *Argument, from the Sacraments of the New-Testament. Now added,* tenth *Argument, the conversion of sinners by the gospel, an evidence of the truth of this doctrine.* Eleventh *Argument, the pouring out of the Spirit in the time of the Primitive Church.*

### Two objections *against this doctrine answered.*

Arg. IX. *IT is safe appearing before God in that righteousness, the efficacy whereof unto salvation we are taught in the Sacraments of the New-Testament.* But in the Sacraments of the New-Testament, we are taught the efficacy of Christ's righteousness unto salvation. God, in these Sacraments, is by *sensible signs* teaching of us *this trush.* So that in the Sacraments there is a *divine testimony* to this doctrine.

I. We are taught the efficacy of Christ's righteousness unto salvation, *by the ordinance of* BAPTISM. As it is said of *circumcision,* that it was a seal of the righteousness of faith; so is *baptism.* The washing of water, signifies our *washing in the blood of Christ.* As the legal washings had a respect unto the cleansing away of sin by Christ's blood, so has our baptismal washing. This ordinance practised first by *John,* and afterwards appointed by Christ to be a perpetual ordinance in the gospel church, is appointed on this design, to strengthen our faith in this doctrine.

1. This appears, *because by baptism is held forth our fellowship*

*fellowship with Christ in his sufferings.* That is signified thereby, that we have an interest in the virtue of his sufferings ; that his sufferings are made over unto us,that we do participate in the good and benefit of them, Rom. vi. 3. "So many of us as were baptised into Jesus Christ, were baptised into his death ;" there was sealed up unto us the virtue and efficacy of his death : therefore, ver. 4. "we are said to be buried with him by baptism into death :" the like expression you have, Col. ii. 12. We are thereby partakers of his sufferings, as if we ourselves had suffered. And if this be held forth, then our justification and reconciliation is held forth ; for that is procured by the sufferings of Christ, Rom. v. 10. "We were reconciled to God by the death of his Son."

2. Baptism *is appointed to be a seal to this dostrine of faith in the righteousness of Christ.* It is a confirmation of this *doctrine,* and the *covenant* of God, to give salvation through faith in Christ and therefore it was *John the Baptist's manner,* before he baptized persons, "to teach them that they must believe on Christ," Acts. xix. 4, 5. And the apostles and apostolical men would not baptize any adult persons, but such as professed to believe on Christ, Acts viii. 36, 37. And indeed when persons do subject themselves unto this ordinance of baptism,they do *acknowledge that doctrine of salvation by Christ.* And therefore, in that promise which Christ puts into the mouths of the apostles, when he sends them to preach the gospel, he makes mention of baptim, Mark xvi. 16. "He that believeth and is baptised, shall be saved ;" baptism is mentioned as the evidence of faith.

3. *Because*

3. *Because baptism represents and shews forth the washing away the guilt of our sins by the blood of Christ.* This is held forth in that, 1 Pet. iii. 21. "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us: not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." For the opening of this place, you may mind.

(1.) That the *ark* spoken of, ver. 20. was a *type* of Christ; therefore baptism is said to be a *like figure:* the ark wherein *Noah's* family was preserved in time of the deluge, typified our salvation by the Lord Jesus: and therefore it is said, that *Noah,* by preparing the ark, became "heir of the righteousness which is by faith," Heb. xi. 7.

(2.) Baptism does *save us,* as it is a *shadow of some spiritual thing.* Therefore it is said, the *like figure,* even baptism, saves us: not but that baptism has some real influence into salvation, as indeed all ordinances have, so the types of old; but the salvation he attributes to baptism, is *representative.*

(3.) The salvation represented by baptism, is the *purging of the conscience from the guilt of sin;* called *the answer of a good conscience.* The washing of the body *signifies* the washing of the soul.

(4.) The reason why he ascribes the answer of a good conscience to *the resurrection of Christ,* and not to his death, is because though his death purchased it, yet his resurrection is the *great evidence* of the *satisfactoriness* of his

his sufferings: therefore we are said "to be begotten unto a lively hope thereby," 1 Pet. i. 3.

II. We are taught the efficacy of Christ's righteousness unto salvation by the *ordinance of the* LORD'S SUPPER. The Lord's Supper was instituted by Christ immediately before his sufferings, wherein bread and wine in the celebration of that ordinance are made the signs of the body and blood of Christ; they are not natural signs of any such thing, but have that signification *put upon* them by *Christ*. And God is teaching us in this *ordinance*, that we have salvation through the *sufferings of Christ*.

1. This appears, because *here the death of Christ is represented as a violent and penal death*. Here is a representation of Christ crucified; here is not merely the shewing forth of his death, but the manner of his death, to mind us of it, that he died in a way of punishment: that he suffered that vengeance that was due unto us for our sins. Isaiah liii. 8. "For the transgression of my people was he stricken."

2. *Here the death of Christ is represented as being upon our account*, 1 Cor. xi. 24. "This is my body which is broken for you." Christ's death was the payment of our debt; we were the principal debtors, Christ was the surety. Our guilt was transferred unto him: He deserved not such sufferings himself, but underwent them as a public person, and therefore by his sufferings we may be justified and saved.

3. In this ordinance *the death of Christ is to be shewed forth*

*forth until he come,* 1 Cor. xi. 26. Which shews that it is satisfactory to the justice of God. It had not been worth the while to appoint signs for the remembrance of it to the world's end, if it had not procured our salvation. It had better have been forgotten, if it had not procured our redemption.

4. The wine in the Lord's Supper is said to be his "blood of the New Testament," Mat. xxvi. 28. Why is it so called, but that it purchases the blessings of the New Testament? The covenant of grace is confirmed by the blood of Christ. On the same account he is called "the Mediator of the New Covenant or Testament," Heb. xii. 24.

5. His blood is here represented, as "shed for the remission of sins," Mat. xxvi. 28. that sins might be forgiven. And it would never have been thus represented, if it had not been effectual for this end: His minding us for what purpose it was shed, shews that the end is thereby attained.

6. In this ordinance *we are invited to put our trust in the death of Christ.* Mat. xxvi. 26, 27. "Take, eat, this is my body," and "drink ye all of it." When the body feeds upon the sacramental bread and wine, the soul is to do that which answers unto it: the soul is to feed upon Christ crucified, which is nothing else but the acting faith on him, John vi. 53.

Having thus cleared it, that in the sacraments of the New Testament, we are taught the efficacy of Christ's righteousness unto salvation it remains that we add

something

something to *shew the evidence* that *arises from hence*, that it *is safe appearing in the righteousness of Christ*. And God's teaching of us this, makes it evident, what waysoever God teaches it in. But there is some *peculiar light* that does arise from this way of teaching by the *sacraments* of the *New Testament*, that may help more abundantly to satisfy our hearts in this truth.

1. If God teach us this in the *sacraments* of the *New Testament*, this shews that *it lies much upon the heart of God to strengthen our faith in this particular*, that it is safe appearing before God in Christ's righteousness.—This shews, that God is very *careful* that we may believe in Christ. If we see a man promise another an estate, make an instrument of conveyance, set his hand, and add his seal to it, we conclude that he desires to give him all manner of assurance, and would leave no room for doubting: so, when we see God sending his servants to witness in his name, that there is salvation in Christ: that he gives it *under his hand*, has left it upon *record* in his *word*, and adds also *sensible signs* for the establishment of our faith, we may conclude that God is very careful to leave no room for doubting in this particular; his design is to *put the thing out of all question*. And certainly God would never thus busy himself to delude us, nor take such care to satisfy us in this particular, but that this is the very way of salvation.

2. If this be the thing that God teaches us in the sacraments of the *New Testament*, then there are *solemn ordinances founded upon this doctrine of salvation through the blood of Christ*. This *doctrine* is the *foundation* that

 these

these *ordinances* are *built upon*. The design of these holy ordinances is to be *witnesses* to us of our redemption and salvation by the blood of Christ. And indeed the *ordinance* of the MINISTRY is founded upon the same bottom. If this doctrine were not true, there had been no occasion for these ordinances. As it was with the sacraments of the *Old Testament:* they were seals of the righteousness of faith: so are the sacraments of the *New Testament*. And certain it is, that all the ordinances of God are built upon *realities*. Who can imagine that God would appoint any ordinance, that should be like the *stock?* that is, the graven image, "a doctrine of vanities," Jer. x. 8. God delights in no worship but what has a *good foundation*. In the sacraments God requires us to worship him, in a religious attendance upon him, while he is teaching us this doctrine of salvation by the righteousness and blood of Christ. In the *sacraments* God requires us to worship him in a religious acknowledgment of the truth of this doctrine; and this would never be if the doctrine were *not infallibly true*. God needs no such worship as is not built upon a real foundation; it is not suitable to give him any worship that is not built upon realities. God would never accept any such honor as this from us, much less require us to give it him, if this doctrine of salvation by the blood of Christ were not true. To deny the doctrine of salvation by the blood of Christ, is to make the *sacraments* a mere *mockery*. In the sacraments God does by sacred ordinances witness to the salvation of believers; and he will never profane his own ordinance by *failing in the performance of that promise*. These sacraments being ordinances appointed of God, to teach us this doctrine of salvation

by

by Christ's blood, we are thereby warranted to pray for a blessing upon them, for the furtherance of our spiritual and eternal good. But this we might not do, if the doctrine held forth by them were not true. The sacraments being appointed by God to testify this doctrine to us; we have a warrant, in the celebration of them, and at other times, to praise and bless the Lord for sending Christ Jesus to work out salvation for us: But certainly if this doctrine were not true, there would be no reason for us so to do, neither would the Lord accept of such praises. If there were not *certain salvation* to be had by Christ, no man alive can give *a reason* of the *institution of the sacraments*, nor salve the honor of God who has appointed them to teach us this doctrine of salvation by the righteousness of Christ.

Arg. X. *The conversion of sinners by the gospel is an evidence of the truth of it, and so of this great truth.* God begets men by the word of truth, Jam. i. 18. The apostle *Paul* saith to the Corinthians, "I have begotten you through the gospel," 1 Cor. iv. 15. And this strongly proves the truth of the gospel. And if the gospel be the instrument of men's conversion, it is *safe to appear in the righteousness of Christ.*

1. Because, When men are *converted, they know the gospel to be true.* Unconverted men have many *objections* against the *safety of believing in Christ.* But when they are converted, they know it to be safe to *trust in Christ.* They are assured of this truth. There be divers degrees of assurance. We read of *assurance of faith,* the *full* assurance of faith,—*all the riches of the*

*full*

*full assurance of understanding.* When men are converted, they "hear the voice of Christ," John v. 25. They receive the word, "as the word of God." 1 Thes. ii. 13. They know the gospel to be "a faithful saying," 1 Tim. i. 13. They know *Christ* to be the "Son of God," John vi. 69. They know that Christ came out from God, and do believe that God sent him, John xvii. 8. And if they know the gospel to be true, then it is certainly true. That which is known is *certain.* Men may conjecture a thing to be true, that is not true. They may be confident a thing is true which is not: But if they *know* it to be true, it is true. There is an agreement between their *knowledge* and the *thing known.* Knowledge is the apprehending and judging of things as they are. When they know a thing, they must assent unto it. He that knows a thing to be true, must by necessity of nature assent unto it. It is impossible they should know it to be false, no arguments will convince that it is false.

2. When sinners are converted, *it is God who reveals the truth of the gospel unto them.* Besides the outward revelation, there is an inward revelation by *the spirit.* There is need of it, because sinners are spiritually blind, and further blinded by carnal reason. Their pride and their fears and their enmity do suggest arguments unto them against the gospel; but when they are converted, God shews the truth of it unto them. Mat. xvi. 17. "Flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee, but my Father that is in heaven." So Eph. i. 17. 18.— They have an "unction from the spirit," 1 John ii. 20. And that which is revealed unto them by the Spirit,

must

must needs be true. God is a God of truth: every word of God is pure, Prov. xxx. 5. God teaches by *enlightening the mind.*

3. Converted persons knowledge of the gospel *works a supernatural change in them.* Acts xxvi. 18. "To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness unto light, and from the power of Satan unto God." Before, they could not trust in Christ, now they can. Before, they could not love God, now they can. And certainly that must be *truth* that works *such a change.* Conjectures and common convictions of the truth may work a *moral* change. Yea, the believing of a falsehood may make a moral change. The believing of the doctrine of purgatory may make a *Papist reform.* But it is only the knowledge of the truth that can make a man *godly.* The knowledge of the gospel makes men to aim at the glory of God, and to hate every thing in the world in comparison of God and Christ; to *glory in Christ Jesus,* and have no confidence in the flesh, Col. iii. 10. "The new man is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him."

Arg. XI. *The pouring out of the spirit in the time of the primitive church, was for the confirmation of this doctrine of our salvation by Christ.* The *Spirit* was *poured out abundantly* upon the *apostles* and others, on the day of *Pentecost,* Acts ii. 4. So the disciples at *Samaria,* at the prayer of *Peter* and *John,* "received the Holy Ghost," Acts viii. 17. So *Paul* when *Ananias* laid hands on him, Acts ix. 17. So *Cornelius* and his company, Acts x. 44. So the *Disciples* at *Ephesus,* Acts xix. 6. God gave miraculous gifts unto believers; they prophesied,

prophesied, they spake many languages, they did wondrous works, &c. These things did evidence the truth of the gospel, men's salvation by Christ.

This is plain,

1. Because *it was foretold by Christ that it should be so,* as the fruit of his ascension, John vii. 38. 39. Christ says, "He that believeth on me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water; but this he spake of the spirit, which they that believe on him should receive, for the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified." The meaning of this *Scripture* is, not that all believers to the end of the world should receive the *graces* of the Spirit, (though this is true) but that after the ascension of Christ, the primitive Christians should receive *extraordinary gifts* of the spirit, which was abundantly fulfilled in those days, and continued for a considerable time.

2. This effusion of the Spirit *was upon this design,* to be a divine testimony to this truth of our salvation by Christ. The *Jews* and *Gentiles* were mightily prejudiced against the gospel. The *Jews,* because CHRIST did not come in such outward glory as they expected, made a mean appearance, and was crucified. The *Gentiles* were prejudiced by the esteem they had of their *own religion,* because of the antiquity of it, being handed down unto them by *their fathers* for many generations; and they had traditions which confirmed them. One we read of, Acts xix. 35. As of the *image* that they thought fell from *Jupiter.* They were misled also by the accomplishment of some *prophecies* of their *oracles;* and the

*judgments*

*judgments* that befel some who abused their *temples.* But God gave these gifts of the Spirit, on purpose to be a testimony to the truth of the gospel. Heb. ii. 4. "God bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders and divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost."

These extraordinary gifts had that effect to *convince multitudes of this truth.* Men that were *enemies* to the *apostles,* were confounded by these wonderful *gifts.* Acts iv. 14. "Seeing the man that was healed standing among them, they could say nothing against it." Yea some that had been bitter enemies were converted. Acts vi. 7.—"A great company of the priests were obedient unto the faith." Multitudes of the people were wrought on by the sight of these miraculous works. Acts viii. 6. "The people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did."

There be *two* things principally that may be *objected* against this doctrine.

Object. 1. *That faith is said to be imputed for righteousness,* Rom. iv. 3, 21, 22. Gen. xv. 5, 6. "To which it may be added, that faith under the gospel, comes in the room of works, that were required under the law. Hence faith and works are so often opposed by the apostle in the matter of justification," Rom. iii. 28. Gal. ii. 16.

*Ans.* 1. That faith that is imputed to us for righteousness, *is believing in Jesus Christ.* It is not any act of faith, nor any other act of justifying faith that is imputed for

for righteousness, but only believing in Christ. This is evident, because that is the description of justifying faith in other places of the Scripture: "He that believeth in him shall have everlasting life," John iii. 16. This faith is described elsewhere, "But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead." Here this faith is described,

(1.) It is faith on God: a relying or depending upon him.

(2.) The consideration under which this is acted on God, that is, as having raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; that is, as *having* wrought out salvation for us by Jesus Christ. It may be *objected* against this interpretation, that this faith that was imputed for righteousness to *Abraham*, is called *a believing God*, Rom. iv. 3. And the promise that he believed, was a promise of a numerous posterity, Gen. xv. 1, 5, 6.

*Ans.* This faith of his did include in it a believing of the promised seed, and a believing on him. God had before promised, "that in him all the families of the earth should be blessed," Gen. xii. 3. And now he promises him a posterity like the stars in number; and *Abraham* entertains this promise as it included in it the *promised seed*, and, as Christ says, rejoiced to see his *day*, "and saw it, and was glad," John viii. 56. *This* was reckoned unto him for righteousness. This is plain, from Gal. iii. 6, 7, 8.

2. *Faith in Jesus Christ does interest us in the right-*

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*eousness of Jesus Christ.* Whoever has this faith, has the righteousness of Christ. God might have made over this righteousness of Christ to us without any condition if he pleased,or upon any other ; but faith was suitable, and God has *appointed this* to be the way of our partaking in the righteousness of Christ ; and hereby men come to have an interest in that. Men come to have an interest in Christ's righteousness, called *gold* and *white raiment* by *buying* that of him, that is, by believing on him, Rev. iii. 18. "The righteousness of God is through faith in Christ." Phil. iii. 9. So that all that have this faith, have the righteousness of Christ.

3. It is very probable that the apostle intends no more, when he says faith is imputed for righteousness, than this, *that believers are reckoned righteous, through the righteousness of Christ.* The phrase seems to import somewhat else, than if he had said, that their faith was their righteousness : to be reckoned for righteousness, seems to note *to be accepted instead of personal righteousness* : and so faith is accepted through the righteousness of Christ. This is further confirmed from that phrase, Heb. xi. 7. "He became heir of the righteousness which is by faith," that is, of the righteousness of Christ, which is applied unto us by faith : and there is no necessity of understanding any thing more by that phrase, "the righteousness of faith," Rom. iv. 11, 13. but the righteousness which we have an interest in by faith.

4. Yet it may be granted, without danger, that *faith is our evangelical righteousness,* but *not our legal righteousness.*

*eousness.* God has made *two covenants* with men, the one is the covenant of works, the other the covenant of grace: in the covenant of works perfect holiness is the condition, that is, the righteousness that must be fulfilled in order unto life: in the covenant of grace *believing* is the condition, and this may be called *gospel righteousness.* Because, according to the terms of the gospel, all believers are declared righteous in the sight of God; and the promise of salvation is made unto believing. But believing is not our *legal* righteousness, it does not answer the demands of the law; there is a necessity of the righteousness of Christ, which is legal righteousness, 1 Cor. i. 30. And indeed *faith* could not have been the *condition of salvation,* had it not interested us in the *righteousness of the law.* The covenant of works and covenant of grace, also must be fulfilled, or we cannot be saved. *Christ* fulfilled the covenant of works for us, and gives us faith in his righteousness, whereby *we* fulfil the covenant of grace.

5. Whereas it is added to strengthen the *objection,* that *faith under the gospel comes in the room of works under the law;* and therefore, as works under the law were to be the matter of justification, so is faith under the gospel.

I answer, *Faith does not, under the gospel, properly come in the room of works,* for works are necessary under the gospel unto justification. Works are the purchasing cause of life; only God has found out another way of performing those works than the law speaks of, namely, by a *surety;* but yet perfect obedience is as necessary as at first, for our justification. The gospel does not justify us in any way of *contradiction* to the *law. Works*

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now are the *legal* condition of justification, but *faith* is the *evangelical* condition of justification; and every believer does fulfil both those conditions, one in his *surety*, the other in his *own person*. Faith is the condition of the covenant of grace, and faith interests us in the righteousness of Christ, whereby the covenant of works is also fulfilled. And when the *apostle* does oppose faith, and the works of the law he does not oppose faith to the works of the law *as performed by Christ*; for they work together for our justification. But he opposes it to *our works*, that our works in obedience to the law can never justify us. Works under the law were the purchasing cause of justification, and so they are still. Works under the law were the condition of justification, and they only; but now they are the legal condition, faith is the evangelical condition. Faith is all the condition required to be performed by us in our own persons.

Object. 2. *God has made many promises of* forgiveness *of sins unto* obedience, *and so also of* salvation, *whereby it seems that it is not safe relying upon Christ's righteousness, but upon our own. There be many promises of forgiveness.* Isaiah i. 16, 17, 18. "Wash you make you clean, put away the evil of your doings," &c. "Come and let us reason together, saith the Lord, tho' your sins be as white as snow, though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Mat. vi. 14. "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you." 1 John iii. 9. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins." Isaiah lv. 7. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return

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unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." *So there are many promises of* salvation *made unto* obedience. Rom. viii. 13. "If ye by the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the flesh, ye shall live." Mat. v. 8. "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God." *And to like purpose eternal life is spoken of as the reward of* obedience. Heb. xi. 1, 26. "He had respect to the recompence of reward." Col. iii. 24. "Knowing that of the Lord ye shall recieve the reward of the inheritance, for ye serve the Lord Christ."

*Ans.* To the first part of the objection from promises of forgiveness made to obedience: I answer,

1. *That forgiveness is not always taken in Scripture for the act of justification, whereby God does take off the sentence of eternal condemnation.* But many times it is taken for God's *overlooking sin,* so as not to bring that *temporal calamity* that he might have done. So when God removes a temporal judgment, he is said to forgive their sins, Mic. vii. 18. So when he forbears to destroy a people that have deserved it, and only brings some less judgments on them, he is said to forgive them, Psal. xcix. 8. "Thou wast a God that forgavest them, though thou tookest vengeance on their inventions." Psal. lxxviii. 38. "He forgave their iniquities, and destroyed them not." Numb. xiv. 20, 21, 22, 23. "And the Lord said, I have pardoned according to thy word, &c. but they shall not see the land that I sware unto their fathers." And sometimes he bestows this pardon upon them whom he does not deliver from the sentence of condemnation; and sometimes he denies

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this unto them whom he does deliver from a sentence of condemnation. *Moses's* sin shall not be so forgiven, but that he must die in the wilderness, for his trespass at the waters of *Meribah*. *Eli* shall not be so forgiven, but that sore judgment shall come upon his family. The preventing or removal of temporal calamities, whether inward or outward, is called *forgiveness*. And this is the very thing intended by forgiveness. Sometimes when God makes promises of forgiveness unto obedience and reformation; the meaning is, that God will *prosper* them and *bless* them, and not pursue them with judgments and calamities. This is evident, because sometimes God promises forgiveness to a *nation* in a way of obedience; it is promised as a national blessing. So in that, Isaiah i. 16, 17, 18. Therefore it does not intend deliverance from *eternal condemnation*. For God does not promise that as a public blessing depending upon public reformation.

2. Sometimes when God promises forgiveness unto obedience, the meaning is, *that if the soul do return unto God by a true work of conversion, he shall be justified.* When men are converted, they are brought into a state of acceptance with God: God is reconciled unto them. So that place is to be understood, Isaiah lv. 7. "Let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him." Acts iii. 19. "Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." And the reason why God promises forgiveness upon *conversion* is, because faith, which is the condition of the covenant, is included in conversion. Converted persons have faith in Christ Jesus.

3. Sometimes when forgiveness is promised unto particular acts of obedience, the meaning is, *that those acts of obedience are a sign that a man is in a justified condition.* So that is to be understood, Mat. vi. 14. "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will forgive you." And that, I. John i. 9. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive our sins." These things are not the condition of forgiveness, much less the meritorious cause of forgiveness; but they are a sign that a man is such a one, to whom the promise of forgiveness does belong. So any one upright act of obedience, is a sign that a man's sins are forgiven, and shall be forgiven in the day of Judgment; because they are things that do accompany faith in Christ, though they have no influence unto justification.

2. To the second part of the objection, that promises of salvation are made to obedience: I answer,

1. That the promises of eternal life are not made unto *obedience, as that which does merit eternal life.* And therefore the best of God's servants do acknowledge themselves *unworthy* of any good, Gen. xxxii. 10. They are sometimes called *worthy. They shall walk with me in white, for* they are worthy. Luke xxi. 36. "Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be counted *worthy* to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man." But the word *axios* rendered *worthy*, often signifies no more than *conveniency* and *suitableness.* Eph. iv. 1 "Walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called." But the obedience of the people of God cannot merit eternal life. There are *two ways* of meriting, neither of which can belong to

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the obedience of the saints : One is, when men do merit a reward from absolute justice, from the mere dignity of the work. In this sense, one man can merit from another, but no man from God ; for whatever man does for God, is but a *due debt :* And, because no man can do any good but by the grace of God, the work itself is the gift of God. There is another way of meriting, and that is according to the tenor of the law. When man keeps the law, he does deserve a recompence according to the tenor of it. Thus Jesus Christ has merited life for us, Eph. i. 14. He has *purchased* the heavenly possession. So the angels merited blessedness for themselves. But the obedience of the saints is not meritorious in this sense, because it fails of legal exactness : there be many sins mixed with their obedience, and their best obedience is very imperfect and polluted ; and indeed, it is upon the account of Christ, that the obedience of the saints is accepted. 1 Pet. ii. 5. " We offer sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ."

2. The *promises of eternal life are not made to obedience as the proper condition of it.* Because God is absolutely engaged to bestow eternal life upon *believers :* every believer has already performed the condition of the covenant ; and is under an absolute promise of life. John i. 2. " This is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life :" and obedience is promised to them, therefore cannot be properly a condition.

3. The *promises of eternal life are made unto obedience as the sign of it.* Obedience, is an evidence that a man is an heir of eternal life ; good works do declare

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that a man is one that shall be saved: obedience is an *evidence* of the love of God; it is from love that a man is enabled to live a life of obedience; and they are an evidence that a man is a believer: where there is obedience there is faith also: men are sanctified by faith in Christ, Acts xxvi. 18.

4. The promises of eternal life are made to obedience, *as the way wherein God has appointed to lead men to it.* God has purposed to lead men in a way of holiness unto happiness, and wherever he begins to deliver men from sin here, to deliver them perfectly hereafter. This is the *order* wherein God has appointed to bestow salvation, first to sanctify and then to glorify: God has appointed to prepare all those for glory here, that he does intend to bestow it upon hereafter; he prepares them here for that holy place, for that holy company, for that holy work that is there, though they shall be more fully prepared at the time of their dissolution: this is the *method* that God has designed to save men in, that they shall have "their fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life," Rom. vi. 27.

3. To the third part of the objection, that *glory* is called the *reward of obedience;* I answer,

1. That when heaven is called a *recompence,* the *word* is not taken for *that which is deserved.* There is a plain difference in the way wherein God inflicts death and bestows life. Rom. vi. 23. "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord."

2. Heaven

2. Heaven is not properly bestowed upon the saints *upon the account of their obedience as the condition of it.* It is upon the account of the *obedience of Christ,* as the meritorious cause, and upon the account of their faith as the condition of it: their obedience is indeed *the way* wherein they do receive it, and so it is a recompence of it. They have heaven in a way of obedience, and heaven will make an abundant recompence for all their labor and travail: the people of God take pains, undergo hardships, undergo many temptations and conflicts in a way of obedience; but heaven will make amends for all, and abundantly recompence all their trouble in the way of serving God: at the end of their journey they shall receive heaven, and that will make amends for all their trouble.

3. *Saints, when they go to heaven, shall receive a recompence on the account of their good works.* Their good works are the condition of an *additional glory*. The *essential glory* of heaven is given on the account of *Christ's purchase,* and *that* God has promised to bestow in a way of obedience: but besides those promises, there are others wherein God has engaged *further degrees* of glory upon condition of obedience: there will be a gracious reward by the covenant of grace given to every act of obedience performed by the saints, Mat. x. *ult.* God will take an account of all the good works of his saints, and recompence every one: so that the more any saint does for God, the more glory shall be bestowed upon him, Phil. iv. 17. And hence it is, as one saint does more for God than another, so the glory of one shall exceed the glory of another. God will not overlook any thing

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that is done by his people. Though the obedience of the saints be imperfect, yet it is capable of being rewarded by the covenant of grace; it is not properly the condition of enjoying heaven, but it is the condition of enjoying further degrees of glory in heaven.

## CHAP. VIII.

### USE I. *Reproof to those that seek Salvation by their own Righteousness.*

USE I. THE *improvement* we shall make of this truth, is, *first,* to REPROVE *those that are seeking acceptance with God, and salvation by their own righteousness;* that, neglecting the righteousness of Christ, are seeking the favor of God *by their own works.* This was the very spirit of the *Jewish* nation in those declining times, wherein Christ Jesus was upon the earth; and this is one great part of the apostasy of the *Antichristian* church, that they teach justification by works. But besides these, it is the ordinary practice of such whose consciences are awakened and terrified, first to seek their peace, and work out their reconciliation by their own righteousness. When once the sinner is stung with the guilt of sin, and under the awful apprehensions of God's wrath, the first way that presents itself for his relief, is the *reformation* of his sins, and diligently applying himself unto the *duties of religion.* And they are travelling this way after peace, sometimes many years, with a neglect of Christ. Men ought indeed to seek their peace *with* reformation, but not *by* their reformations. But men

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are mightily wedded to this way of seeking salvation by their own duties. This is one of those things that make the work of conversion so exceeding difficult. It is a difficult thing to bring men to be earnestly seeking salvation; and when they are brought unto that, it is very difficult to bring them to seek it in the right way. "They sought it not by faith but as it were by the works of the law," Rom. ix. 32. But men have no ground at all for this. It is safe appearing before God in the righteousness of Christ; but it is nowise safe for men to trust in their own righteousness. When men make their own righteousness the ground of their confidence, they do but flatter and please themselves in a vain delusion; their own works can never procure their acceptance with God.

In prosecuting this *use*, let us consider,

1. *Who they are that seek salvation by their own righteousness.*

2. *What righteousness they do attain unto.*

3. *What are their temptations to seek their salvation in this way.*

4. *What confidence they have in their own righteousness.*

5. *How they do to hide it from themselves, that they trust in their own righteousness.*

6. *The vanity of men's trusting to their own righteousness.*

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The first thing to be considered is,

*Who they are that seek salvation by their own righteousnes.*

But before I give you their characters, it will be needful to *premise* two things.

1. They that seek salvation by their own righteousness, *do not expect salvation from the covenant of works, as it requires perfect obedience in order unto life.* They dare not adventure their souls on the strictness of the law; though they had need to do so, if they seek life by their own works. But they do not thus; they look upon their righteousness as that which will *allay* the anger of God; and be an inducement unto God to save them; that which will win the good-will of God, and draw the heart of God to them: yea, they look upon their righteousness, as that which will bring God *in their debt;* that God is beholden to them for their service. Yet they do not lay claim to blessedness by the strictness of the law, for they know, and confess themselves to be *sinners,* they pray for forgiveness; *which things* are inconsistent with justification by their own works. The *Jews* did not stand upon a strict covenant of works, Rom. ix. 31, 32. "They sought it as it were by the works of the law." But these men do make such a mixture of the covenant of works with the covenant of grace, wherein the covenant of works is predominant. They make some profession of the gospel, and yet adhere to a covenant of works. Therefore the apostle tells them, "that if they be circumcised, Christ shall profit them nothing," Gal. v. 2. They made account to have some benefit by Christ;

Christ; so they made account to have some benefit by grace. Therefore the apostle tells them, "that whoever of them are justified by the law, are fallen from grace." They did not pretend to the strictness of the law, but took in gospel principles into their way of justification, and yet were *legal* all the while. This makes the apostle dispute in that manner against them, Rom. xi. 6. "If it be by grace, it is no more of works, otherwise grace is no more grace; but if it be of works, then it is no more grace, otherwise work is no more work." They mingled grace and works together, they made their *own works* the foundation of their hopes, and yet took in the *plea* of *God's grace* and CHRIST's *righteousness*. They thought their own works did contribute something, & the grace of God through Christ would make up their defects.

2. *The saints of God have a great deal of a self-righteous spirit remaining in them, and men must not conclude because they find such workings in their hearts, that they are self-righteous.* No doubt many of the *Galatians* that were tainted with the doctrine of *Legalists* were really converted, Gal. iv. 14. There was somewhat of this spirit in *Peter*, Mat. xix. 27. "We have forsaken all; what shall we have therefore?" As the people of God are not completely delivered from other corruptions, so not from *carnal confidence*. There is such a spirit working, and sometimes prevailing in them. But there is also in the saints an evangelical spirit, Phil. iii. 3. "We rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." They allow not themselves to have any confidence in the flesh.

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These things premised, take *these characters* of those men that *seek salvation by their own righteousness.*

1. *Such men as magnify themselves by their duties and frames.* They count highly of themselves, because of what they do. *Pride* is the very spirit of self-righteousness. The self-righteous man sets a great price upon what he does : he loves to be thinking upon what he has done ; how his heart melted in such a duty, how his affections were drawn out and enlarged in such a prayer, what he has done and suffered in the cause of God. He loves to chew over duties again, as things that do commend him to God : while another man is magnifying free grace, and the righteousness of Christ, the self-righteous man is idolizing his own services, falls in love with his own beauty ; is taken with his own carriage, and thinks that God and man should be taken with him. He thinks his works do ingratiate him with God, and draw the heart of God towards him. So the Pharisee, Luke xviii. 12. "I fast twice in the week, and give tithes of all that I possess." He minds God of it, what a choice man he was, and thinks that God has not many such servants as himself. He counts his own righteousness *his riches,* Rev. iii. 17. He is *rich* in prayers, rich in mournings, rich in duties of religion, and of charity. He is not brought to be *poor in spirit ;* He does not see himself *without money and without price,* but has a considerable estate of his own to live upon. He thinks, that by his duties he *gains* something towards the paying for salvation, Phil. iii. 7. He places his confidence in those things, and *glories* in them : As a rich man boasts of his wealth, so he boasts of his

righteousness,

righteousness, and despises other men: As the Pharisee, Luke xviii. 11. "I am not as other men, or like this Publican." Whereas the spirit of a saint is to glory in the righteousness and sufferings of Christ, Gal. vi. 14. "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of Jesus Christ."

2. *Such men make their duties their refuge in times of danger.* Such men are oftentimes scared from a remembrance of their former courses, and sense of present failings: Sometimes when they hear the threatenings of the word; sometimes when it is a time of mortality: so, when they are ill, and under apprehension that their dying time is come, and *when* in this fright, they betake themselves to their own righteousness as their *strong hold.* A godly man *makes* his uprightness an argument to hope. The self-righteous man makes his duties the foundation of his faith; in a stormy time he gets under them for shelter, instead of getting under the shadow of Christ; he flies to his own duties, they are his castle, wherein he fortifies himself against fear, they are his harbour, where he casts anchor; from thence he takes his great encouragement.

This was *Paul's sheet-anchor* before his conversion, *that he was, touching the righteousness of the law, blameless,* Phil. iii. 6. The self-righteous man comforts up his heart with this, that surely God will have some respect unto his pains, his affections, his charity, his strict walking: this is his fort that he retires unto in time of danger. He has not been so bad as other men, and he hopes God will not deal in rigour with him. He thinks

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that his duties do lay some engagements upon the love and compassion of God; he hopes his prayers and tears have some constraining efficacy upon the compassionate heart of God.

Sometimes, he thinks that his duties lay some bonds upon the *justice* of God, he thinks it equal that he should be spared, and that it would be extreme rigour, for God to cast him off at last, when he has done so much for him. Sometimes he thinks his duties have laid a tie upon the *faithfulness* of God: God has made promises to them that seek, and he claims an interest in them: he makes his duties the stay of his soul, and when conscience is pursuing of him, he takes sanctuary here.

3. *Such men take their encouragement from their frames and duties to come to Christ.* Many self-righteous men do draw comfort from Christ, and they think they have their dependence on *Christ*; count themselves believers: but the comfort they draw from Christ, is at the *second-hand*; their encouragement takes its first rise from some *excellency in themselves.* They would not dare to trust in Christ, but under such *considerations* as these; that they are reformed, not so bad as other men, have love to Christ, are sorrowful for their sins, have a good affection to ordinances, and the people of God: such considerations do embolden them to come to Christ. He thinks, if he were so bad, and so bad, *Christ* would not accept of him: but it being otherwise with him, he thinks he may venture. He desires to be better with all his heart, and so hopes that it is not presumption for him to come to Christ. Finding such frames in his own heart,

heart, he thinks that Christ does mean him in the invitations of the gospel; so he makes his own duties a step towards Christ; he makes his own gracious frames a preparation to his coming to Christ.

He dresses up himself in his own righteousness; and when he has made himself as *comely as he can*, adventures to cast himself upon Christ. He imagines something in himself, why God should bestow the righteousness of Christ rather upon him than upon another: whereas a saint comes to Christ merely upon gospel encouragements, from the grace and faithfulness of God, and righteousness of Christ, Isaiah. xlv. 24. "Surely shall one say, in the Lord Jehovah have I righteousness and strength."

5. *Such persons labour after some goodness to prepare them for Christ.* They are striving after some in order to their closing with Christ. When they are invited to come to Christ for salvation, they excuse themselves, and think they are not good enough yet to come to Christ. They think it would be presumption to come with *such hearts* as they have, they think nobody ever came to Christ that had such hearts; but they think if they were better they might come; and so they are labouring after some self-excellency, in order to their closing *with* Christ. They are *purifying* themselves, and garnishing themselves, that they may be fit to come to Christ. They think if their hearts were more broken, they might come. If they had more love to *Christ*, if they did see the real evil of sin; and so they make it their business to get these qualifications. They do not count it their next work to believe; but think they must get some other self-excel-

lency in order to believing : so they make it their present work to *mend their own heart*, and sometimes they think they get a little forward, and then they go backward ; just like a man that undertakes to empty a fountain, which fills as fast as he empties ; or like one that attempts to fetch a dead body to life ; he chafes it, and it grows warmer, but is as far from life as ever. So those men are striving against their dulness and hardness ; they tug with their own hearts to make them better ; for he thinks he must be better before he believes in Christ : whereas a saint, when he finds his heart bad, comes to Christ to make it better.

6. *They are discontented if they be not accepted because of their duties.* If God does not comfort them, but they are held under terrors ; they wonder what the matter is : and so likewise when God crosses them in his providences, and follows them with afflictions, their hearts are discontented, they are heavy and displeased. They think it strange that their duties are no more regarded ; that they should do so much, and be requited so : they lay hard dealing to God's charge, think it is not equal. They are ready to look upon it to be a piece of cruelty that God does not help them, when they have done so much for him ; especially if God comforts others that have not been so long in a way of religion ; they find peace and communion with God : This makes the heart swell : Men cannot bear it that others should have mercy, and they not. Their services make them very discontented under God's dealing towards them. Isaiah lviii. 3. " Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and thou seest not ? wherefore have we afflicted our souls, and thou takest no knowledge ?"

*Secondly,*

*Secondly*, Let us *consider what righteousness such men may attain unto*, that seek salvation by their own righteousness. And there is no doubt but such men may go a *great way in religion*; Some attain one measure, and others another. But they may go far, though they fall greatly short of what the *least saints* do attain; yet they are capable of attaining a great deal: they may attain so much as to exceed what many saints do attain as to the *external part of religion*; they may make a glorious shew, so as to gain the approbation and applause of the people of God.

Take it under these *three* heads,

1. *They may attain to as much as any saint, as to the external part of religion.* All the external acts of holiness may be done by him that has no principle of holiness. The external acts of grace may be so imitated, that no man can discern the difference. Though ordinarily the conversation of the saints be better than the conversation of other men, yet others may attend the external part of godliness as much as any saint; for it is not grace that gives men power to do that which is externally good: Nature gives men the power to do the action, and grace gives men power to do it in a right manner, and for a right end. And though corruption in natural men, be strong to hinder them from the external acts of religion, yet that may be overruled. Natural men have a power to do the external duty, and they may have a will too, through some overruling consideration. *Paul*, though a *Pharisee*, may have a blameless conversation. Though *Uriah* was not a faithful priest, yet he was a *faithful wit-*

*ness*,

ness, Isaiah viii. 4. Many a natural man is of *chaste* conversation, *temperate* in the use of meat and drink, *just* in his dealings with men, *charitable* to the poor, *strict* in observing of the *sabbath*; he may be greatly instrumental in *promoting the public good*: abound in *fasting and prayer*; fall in with the better party; take *much pains for the conversion of others*. Yea, the apostle intimates, that "a man may give all his goods to feed the poor, and his body to be burned and not have charity," 1 Cor. xiii. 3. An opinion of merit is sufficient to make many men give all they have to the *poor*. And men may *suffer death* in the cause of God, and have *no grace*: Either from *sturdiness of spirit*; some are men of high spirits, and count it a disgrace to them to yield; they scorn that others should get the day of them; they will not disparage themselves, nor humor their enemies so as to yield to them: Or, from *confidence of their salvation*; lotting upon it, that if they die in such a cause, they shall surely go to heaven.

2. *They may attain unto great religious frames.* Many carnal men have had very *strong pangs of affection*; their hearts may overflow in a religious way. Many that have no principle of grace, have had great impressions on their hearts from the word of God: The hearts of natural men have been considerably engaged in the ways of God. The *Galatians*, many of whom *Paul* was afraid of, were formerly greatly affected with the gospel, Gal. iv. 15. He that was not prepared to go through sufferings, tells Christ in a pang, "He will follow him whithersoever he goes," Luke ix. 57, 58. *Saul* has a great pang, because "God had wrought salvation in Israel,"

Israel," 1 Sam. xi. 13. "They sang God's praise that soon forgat his works," Psal. cvi. 12, 13. Men may *receive the word with joy*, yet not hold out in a day of persecution, Mat. xiii. 21. Men may *bewail* their miscarriages, though their hearts be not mended, 1 Sam. xxvi. 21. Men may *delight* in religion, that are sincere in it, Job. xxvii. 9, 10. Men may *abominate* some sins, though none be mortified, 1 Chron. xxi. 6. "The king's word was abominable unto Joab." Men may be *full of zeal*, that are strangers unto Christ, Phil. iii. 6. These pangs and religious frames are nothing else but the various workings of an *enlightened conscience* and *self-love*. Some men are enlightened to see their danger in a way of sin, and the hopes of blessedness in a way of returning to God. God puts a light into the mind, whereby men come to see their present danger; and hell, and eternity, and wrath, seem real things unto them: and after a while God gives many of them some special encouragements of the possibility of salvation. Natural men are sometimes under a common conviction of the glory of God. A natural man is capable of some discoveries that way; and these convictions work upon that natural principle of *self-love*. And hence arise that fear, joy, hope, thankfulness, that many natural men do experience. All those religious frames and dispositions that are in natural men, are nothing else but the various shapings of self-love. The same principle of self-love which made them before to follow the world and their pleasures, does, after conviction, make them seek after holiness, Christ and salvation.

3. *They may continue in the practice of religion all their*

*their days.* Though many times they do not, but fall away sometimes to *heresy,* sometimes to *profaneness*, and ordinarily, if they live long, they grow sapless and *unsavoury,* so as to have little relish of religion upon their hearts: and generally those *tastes* which they have *had of the good word of God,* are lost after a while, so as to have no enlivening impression on the heart; these affections which some time were in them, wither away. Yet without question, many of them do continue in the practice of religion as long as they live. If they may continue in the practice of religion one year, why not seven? why not twenty? why not as long as they live? Love of *credit,* a compliance *with the custom* of the place where they live, the workings of *natural conscience,* may have such an influence upon them, as to make them continue in the practice of religion: Christ indeed says of some, "that they believe for a time, and in time of temptation fall away," Luke viii. 13.; but his meaning is, that it is commonly so: but experience shews, that a temporary faith may live under persecution. All false faith indeed may be called *temporary,* because it is subject to perish in time: it is not built upon such a foundation as to make it stand against all temptations. True faith is built upon firm foundations, the power, mercy, and faithfulness of God, and the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ; and in these things there is a bottom for faith in the dismallest times that may come; here is that which will answer all temptations, 2 Thes. ii. 16. But a false faith is built upon *failing foundations,* the goodness of his frames, mistakes about the love of God; and hence his faith may fail; though I know no condition that a false heart can be brought into, *except one,* wherein he

may

may not continue to believe: he may continue to believe under great afflictions from the hand of God, under great persecutions from men, in a dying day: Indeed, if God do discover to him what a heart he has, and shew him *the plague of that*, his false faith will die away; for the foundation of it, *sc.* an opinion of his own goodness, is taken away; but yet, even then, he may continue in the practice of religion.

*Thirdly*, Let us consider *what are the* TEMPTATIONS *that make men seek salvation by their own righteouness.* And certainly they must be great temptations that have so strong an efficacy upon the hearts of men. Godly men have much to do to restrain and subdue this spirit in themselves; and generally, convinced sinners are mightily carried away with this spirit. Though God does so plainly witness against it in his word; yet multitudes of men are seeking life in this way; so that we may conclude, there is some strong current that men are carried with; some great entanglements that men are thus ensnared with: though many are not aware of it, yet there are *mighty temptations* to lead them into this mistake. And we may reduce them to *these heads*:

1. The *pride of man's heart.* Fallen man is a proud creature; though he has so much to bring down his spirit, yet he is extremely addicted to magnify himself. Job xi. 12. "Vain man would be wise, though man be born like a wild ass's colt:" self-love which is the very *root* of original sin, runs principally in *this channel.* Men are miserably devoted to this way of sinning: though men have extremely debased themselves, and degraded

themselves

themselves from that excellency which God bestowed, on them, yet they are exceeding prone to swell with pride. *Pride* is thought to be the first sin of the *Devil*; and we are sure there was a great deal of *pride* in the *first sin* of *man*: that temptation of *being like God, knowing good and evil,* had a principal influence into the apostasy of our first parents; and this spirit runs through the life of man, from his childhood to old age; therefore called *the pride of life,* 1 John ii. 16. How many methods have men found out to gratify their pride; what cost are men at, what pains do they take, what hazards do they run, that they may satisfy this lust of pride? Men are proud of every thing: all natural excellencies, acquired endowments, external enjoyments, are fuel to pride. Men are proud of their duties and graces, yea proud of their sins too; proud of the mercies that God bestows on them, and proud of the afflictions that they have, or have had. Pride is deeply rooted in the heart of man; and hence it is, that he is so addicted to seek salvation by his own righteousness; the spirit of a self-righteous man, is to exalt himself. Setting up a man's own righteousness is directly contrary to the work of *humiliation*, and the grace of humility. A *Pharisaical* spirit is a proud spirit, Luke xviii. 14. Pride is the reason of men's setting up their own righteousness; and it has an influence these *two ways*:

(1.) *Pride makes men desirous to live upon themselves, and to be beholden to the grace of God no more than needs must.* Proud man had rather be the author of his own happiness, than to have it in a way of free gift. Most men had rather earn their living with their fingers end, than live upon the charity of other men: so in this case,

men

men had rather compound with God for heaven upon the account of their own services, than be beholden to free grace. It would please the haughty heart of man exceedingly, to have the honour of saving himself; that he might have that to boast of, that he had heaven as the fruit of his own labours: "Boasting is excluded by the law of faith," Rom. iii. 27. and therefore the heart does not like that way. Men's spirits will very hardly come down to take life as a gift from a provoked God. Men can hardly stoop to it, to come to the door of mercy; if they can make any other shift, they will not do it. It is exceeding cross to flesh & blood, to have nothing of his own to glory in; and to yield himself to be a poor, vile and unworthy creature, to be altogether helpless in himself. Man was once set out with a good stock, & might have earned heaven; & it is very hard, to him to yield himself a prodigal; he stomachs it to come for alms; it would be hard, to one especially that has been rich so to do. This we may see in the prodigal, Luke xv. 14, 15. "He began to be in want, and went and joined himself to a citizen of that country." Nothing but extremity would bring down his spirit, so as to make him return to his father; he had rather work hard, than come a begging to his father.

(2.) *Pride makes men conceited of their own righteousness.* Proud men are wont to have an high opinion of their own things; they set an high rate on their own excellencies, and so do men of their righteousness. Pride makes men unreasonable in their esteem of it, they magnify it beyond all bounds. Pride hinders them from passing an impartial judgment upon what they *do* and *are*: they think their hearts are a great deal better than

they be. When *Hazael* was told what he should afterwards do, he answers the *prophet*, "Is thy servant a dog that he should do this thing?" 1 Kings viii. 12, 13. They imagine that their corruptions are mortified, that they love God and Jesus Christ: Prov. xxx. 12. "There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, yet are not cleansed from their filthiness." Pride makes them take up a *good opinion* of their own hearts upon small appearances: and when they have only a few pangs of affection, presently they are conceited that they have sincere desires after holiness and faith; or at least that their is such an inclinableness to the ways of God, which will with diligence grow up to be love to God and his ways.

They think they shall bring their hearts to it after a while; and are conceited that their services are very pleasing and acceptable to God; they think there is worthiness in them, that they deserve to be accepted. They think they carry it *better* than others: pride makes men to *admire* their *own excellency;* to fall in love with their own beauty; they extol the services that they do, because they are their own. Luke xviii. 12. "I fast twice in the week, and give tithes of all that I possess."

2. Another temptation is, *that God in the Scripture does manifest and testify his great approbation of holiness and obedience, prayer and repentance.* God gives great encouragement unto men to walk in ways of holiness. He bears witness often to his acceptance of the obedience of his people. God is all along in the Scripture

witnessing

witnessing the regard he has unto holiness. Sometimes he tells us that he does delight in it, Psal. xv. 8. "The prayer of the upright is his delight." That he loves it. Psal. xi. 7. "The righteous Lord loveth righteousness." That he loveth the righteous, Psal. cxlvi. 8. "The Lord loveth the righteous." That he is reconciled to such as do amend their ways, Isai. lv. 7. "Let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy on him." And God makes promises of all sorts of blessings unto holiness: of outward blessings, peace and plenty, and honour and long life: and of spiritual mercies, of the manifestation of himself, and communion with them: and of eternal life. "You have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life," Rom. vi. 22. Men meeting with abundance of such passages in the Scripture, are greatly strengthened in their apprehensions of the efficacy of their own righteousness, to procure their *justification*. Such passages of Scripture are strained by them, and they grow up thereby into a more established opinion of their safety, upon the account of their own righteousness: meeting with such commendations of the practice of holiness, they are much confirmed in their carnal confidence, in *such ways as these*.

(1.) *Hence they think their own righteousness does draw the heart of God unto them;* they think *that their holiness does attract the affection and good will of God unto them.* They imagine that their holiness does work them into God's love; that the beauty of their holiness does captivate the affections of God; that their cries and carriages do work upon divine compassions, and make God willing to bestow salvation upon them. And indeed, a

self-righteous

self-righteous man doth attribute more to his own righteousnes, than a saint does to the righteousness of Christ: a godly man neither does, nor ought to make the righteousness of Christ the *foundation* of God's love. Christ has purchased the favor of God, and reconciliation with him; but he did not purchase the good will and love of God; there was no need of purchasing that. God could *love sinners freely*; there was no possibility of purchasing that; that was too great a thing to be purchased. Christ procured the *effects of God's love*, but not the *love itself*. God's love was the cause of Christ's coming, not the effect thereof; but the self-righteous man imagines a virtue in his own righteousness to draw the heart of God to him, and engage the love of God.

(2.) *Hence they think their own righteousness does make amends for their miscarriages*; that they have made an atonement for themselves for their former sins. They think their *repentance* makes up that breach that sin had made, and that, out of a respect unto that, God forgets what they have done amiss. They imagine that there is a reconciling virtue in their *reformations* and *good services*; that they satisfy God for what has past. And herein they attribute *more* to their *own obedience*, than we ought to do to the *active obedience* of Christ. Christ's active obedience was not sufficient to satisfy for sin: it purchased the blessings of the covenant, but it did not deliver us from the curse. Active obedience to the law has merit in it, if it be perfect; but it has not any satisfying virtue. It is something of *another kind* that God requires for satisfaction. The law threatens death for sin, Rom. vi. 23. "The wages of sin is death." So that Christ's active

obedience

obedience could not satisfy for sins: if he undertake to satisfy for sins, he must bear the punishment of death.

(3.) *Hence they think that out of a respect to their own righteousness, and upon the account thereof, God will bestow salvation upon them.* They think that this is that which interests them in all the good of the covenant. Their own prayers and reformations, and affections and zeal in the cause of God, is that which makes them heirs of glory, and gives them a title to the eternal inheritance. They look upon their own righteousness as the *price* of heaven, and think they have done something to the earning of glory; they are at work for God, and look upon heaven to be their wages.

And herein they attribute that to their own righteousness, that ought to be attributed *unto the righteousness of Christ.* This was the very design of the active obedience of Christ, to give us a claim to glory. Because we were very unworthy, and could not fulfil the condition of the law, Jesus Christ undertook for us, and has performed the righteousness of the law, and merited eternal life. Rom. vi. 23. "The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

3. Another temptation to make men depend upon their own righteousness, and seek salvation in that way, is the *seeming excellency of their own righteousness.* There is a real excellency in true holiness, it is the perfection of man's nature. Sin is a vile thing, but holiness does advance and perfect man's nature: Holiness is the glory of man. *The righteous is more excellent than his neighbor.* The righteous are called *excellent ones,* Psal. xvi. 3. And

though all the righteousness of self-righteous men is but hypocrisy, and therefore an abomination in God's sight; yet they themselves do imagine that there is an excellency in it, and from hence they make it a ground of confidence; imagining an excellency in it, they think God is taken with it, and that it is meritorious: they do, from the excellency of their carriage promise salvation to themselves. And there is a *fourfold excellency* which they are wont to take special notice of.

(1.) The *moral excellency* of their carriage. They count their carriage excellent, because they live according to *principles of honesty*, and *sobriety*, and *piety*. They are no drunkards, nor oppressors, nor railers, nor sabbath-breakers, nor swearers, *&c.*; but they have a good conversation: they do not live a profane nor sensual life: are not blemishing themselves by vicious courses. They have an amiable lovely, and justifiable carriage. Their outward carriages are according to principles of reason and religion. Their behaviour is equal, and honorable; they walk without blame. The *Pharisee* was lifted up with that; he was *no extortioner, unjust* person, *nor adulterer*. The *young man* was taken with that, that he had been *moral from his youth*, Mat. xix. 20. *Paul* speaks of that as a thing which men build much upon, that as "touching the righteousness of the law they are blameless," Phil. iii. 6.

(2.) The *religious affections* that they feel working *in their hearts*. Sometimes such men have *great affections*; they have melted affections under the considerations of their sins, and God's mercies, outward salvation, the

sufferings

sufferings of Christ for sinners, and the like: they have a delight in ordinances, strong desires after Christ and holiness; they have a *zeal* against the sins of the times, and for the better party. The Scripture is plentiful in instances of such affections in unconverted men, as *Saul*, the *stony-ground hearers*, and others, and they count these sincere, and are highly taken with them. They look upon these to be the very spirits of religion, things which do greatly ingratiate them with God. They look upon *these affections* as *blessed frames* of heart. These they think are the things that God does especially delight in; they count these heavenly frames of heart. They are much affected with their affections; now they reckon they have a suitable frame of heart to spiritual things.

(3.) *The difficulties that they go through in serving of God;* which raises the price of their services, and makes them more available. They mind that they take a great deal of pains in serving God, in reading and praying, and taking spiritual opportunities; they do not gratify a slothful spirit, but are *laborious* in religion, and they hope God takes notice of that. So they are at considerable *expense;* they spend off their estates in works of piety and charity; and on that account value their duties highly: so they are much in fasting, and in that way afflict their bodies: so they, upon the account of religion, have displeased friends, incurred the anger of men, been reproached, borne persecution: And upon this account, they count their services excellent; they think it is no small matter to do what they have done, and are ready to please themselves that they have merited highly thereby, Luke xviii. 12. "I fast twice in the week and give tithes of all that I possess."

(4.) The

(4.) The *serviceableness of their carriages.* They by their carriages, have done *great service,* and upon that account they do extol and magnify them; they have by their charity relieved many a godly man; and, by their *zeal, counsel, bounty, learning,* the *public good* has been promoted; they have been a means to promote religion in the place where they lived. They have put their shoulders to the *cause of God* when it needed a lift. They have been *peace-makers,* they have been ready to forward any good design; they have comforted mourners; they have stirred up others to godliness; there has been much good promoted by them; they have had a hand in many a good work; and have been instruments to promote the glory of God in their place. And upon this account they think they have deserved well: such services are not to be forgotten: Mat. vii. 22. "Lord, Lord, have we not prophecied in thy name?"

And there are *two things* that do considerably strengthen this temptation.

(1.) *That others have a good,* and, it may be, *an high opinion of them.* They take notice of that, that others esteem them; they pass currently for *saints* where they are known; they have the good word of others: godly men that have a spirit of discerning, do take them for saints; they have entertained them into their societies, take delight in their company, entreat their prayers. This greatly establishes them in that apprehension, that they carry themselves excellently. They think they are not alone in judging so of themselves, but others, wise and experienced men, judge so too. It would shake their

confidence

confidence if others thought them hypocrites; but they perceive that others have no suspicion of them.

(2.) *That their carriages are far better than the carriages of many others.* When they compare themselves with many others, they are hugely taken with themselves: many others are profane and vicious, but they are not; they do not lead such lewd lives as others do; yea, they carry it better than many *professors;* they are more exemplary in their conversation, not carried away so with the sins of the times, more strict in sanctifying the sabbath, and the like. They are more forward for public good; not so passionate, not so covetous, nor so haughty, nor so complying with ill customs, as many others. Luke xviii. 11. "I am not as other men, nor as this publican."

4. A fourth *temptation* that proves a snare to them, is, *that God owns them in this way.* Since they have reformed their course, and taken up the practice of religion, God's *dispensations* to them are otherwise than formerly. And this confirms their apprehensions that God is reconciled unto them, that they are taken into his favor, and so that their works are taking with God, and prevail for their acceptance with him. They think the providence of God does witness for them, that their services are of *great account.* And there are *three things in providence* that they build upon:

(1.) *That God prospers them and succeeds them in their occasions.* They thrive in the world more than they did formerly, their estates are blessed, they do not meet with such

such crosses in providence as formerly. That promise seems to be made good unto them, Psal. i. 3. "Whatsoever he doth shall prosper." God in his providence smiles upon them; their cattle increase, or their trading succeeds, and they have credit and good acceptance among men; they are improved in public service: and this they attribute to the delight that God takes in their conversation; they look upon this as the fruit of their goodness.

(2.) *That God has given some remarkable answers to their prayers*: And that not only when they have joined with others in prayer, but when they have prayed alone, in some particular case of their own, they have gone before God, and poured out their hearts before him, and he has done the thing for them, and granted the desire of their hearts. And though there be no evidence of favor merely in God's doing that which men ask for, "God hears the ravens that cry," Psal. cxlvii. 9. and sometimes he grants men's desires in judgment, Psal. cvi. 15.; yet these men build much on this thing, inasmuch as God has gratified them in a thing that lay much upon their heart, and did it also in answer to their prayer.

(3.) *That God does sometimes draw nigh to them, and quicken and encourage them, when they have been serving him.* Sometimes when they have been at prayer, God has greatly enlarged their hearts; so in *hearing* of the word, and *other ordinances*, their heart does many times melt, God assists them, and does not leave them to a dry sapless spirit in the practice of religion; but he warms their hearts, and kindles gracious affections in them;

while

while others are sleeping in the house of God, their hearts are greatly affected with spiritual things, and they look upon this as a sign that their ways are pleasing unto God. They count that now they have communion with God, and now and then they have had some *special encouraging words* set home upon their hearts; some promises have come to them, that have much revived them. And this they think evidences the favor of God, and the excellency of their carriages.

5. The fifth temptation is, *that they do not know any other way to get the favor of God, but by their own righteousness.* It is a dreadful thing unto them to go without the favor of God. They have had convictions of the dreadfulness of hell; and they tremble to think of being rejected, they would not for a world be cast away; it is an amazing thing to them to think of dwelling with devouring fire. So that they are pressed in spirit, if it be possible to secure their salvation, and get as strong and sure a title to heaven as they can; and they do not know any other way but this, by their own righteousness. There is another way proposed unto them; they hear often of the way of salvation by Christ, but it is a mere mystery unto them; they do not conceive the safety that is in this way, their reason does not reach it; whatever is said unto them, they look upon it unlikely, they are not satisfied in the justice of it, or that God can find in his heart to pardon them in this way. They are full of reasonings against it: though God testify plainly unto this way of salvation, yet they dare not venture it: this way is hidden from them, 2 Cor. iv. 4. "If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost." Hence they dare

not

not give over seeking by their own righteousness, and let go their carnal confidences. It is with them as with a man that is falling down some steep place, or a man that is drowning, they catch hold on a twig, or a rotten stick, though it be sufficient to help them. Or as with a traitor that gets into a castle, because he sees no other way of preservation. So awakened sinners are seeking by their own righteousness to make their peace; because they know no other way, they dare do no other; though they have many misgivings of heart, that all their righteousness will not do, yet they look on this as the most probable way, and hence dare not take any other course.

This appears,

(1.) *Because terrors of conscience put them upon their duties.* Though afterwards they may find some delight in them, and some affections to God and his ways, yet the first thing that sets them a-going is *terror;* fear makes them reform and pray; they are scared into religion, they are forced out of these sinful practices, and fired out of those ways of sin that they were addicted unto. Their fear does direct them unto this way as the safest. If they knew a better way, they would not violently pursue this; for there is that principle in every man by nature, that carries him out necessarily to seek his own happiness. Fear and dread of hell make them do what they do in religion. Job xli. 25. "By reason of breakings, they purify themselves."

(2.) *They are afraid to see the plague of their own hearts.* Experience witnesses to this, that they dare not yield themselves to be such as they are: many a sinner dare

dare not yield himself to be unsound in religion, to be unconverted; they compass sea and land to strengthen their false hopes: and many a man that knows he is unconverted, and has some conviction that he must see the badness of his heart before he be converted, and accordingly prays for it, that God would open his eyes and discover it to him, yet all the while he is secretly nourishing an apprehension that his heart is better than it is. He hopes he hates sin, that he desires holiness, that he is sincerely labouring after the work of humiliation; and he *dreads* the sight of *his own heart,* is very loath to yield it to be so bad as it is. And when God forces the conviction on him, it is a terror unto him; he is like a man that desires that a limb of his body should be cut off for the preservation of his life: yet when it comes to be done, it is a terror to him; so a natural man does not see the plague of his own heart, nor, will he ever see it till it be forced upon him.

*Fourthly,* Let us consider *what confidence such men may attain unto.* And it is plain from the Scripture, that such may be *very confident* of their *good estate,* and *future salvation;* they may be strongly possessed with it, that they shall be saved. Though many that are seeking life by their own righteousness, live in dismal perplexity, and through fear of death are subject to bondage; and others live an unquiet life between hope and fear, according as the frames of their hearts are; yet there be those that do attain a very strong confidence. Prov. xxx. 12. "There are a generation that are pure in their own eyes, yet are not cleased from their filthiness." John ix. 40. "Are we blind also?" A self-righteous man may be

more confident than many saints. And this confidence does arise partly from a conceit of the worthiness of their carriages; they think that their carriages do make up the breach between God and them: and partly from *signs*, which are of two sorts.

(1.) *False signs.* Many times men make rules to judge of themselves by, which are fallacious and deceitful: Men make a judgment of themselves by a false standard: they take such to be signs of salvation as may be found in many a man that perishes; either from their own fancy, or from the apprehensions of some other men, or from mistaking some other pieces of Scripture: Men look upon that to be a sign, which does not distinguish an heir of glory from a child of wrath. It may be of great advantage for *ministers* to lay down sometimes *probable signs*, but men must have a care that they do not draw conclusions from thence. When men try themselves by false signs, they take a ready course to deceive themselves. Thus men do, when they conclude from hence that they *pray constantly in secret*, they *do not know that they allow themselves in any known sin*, they *associate with the people of God*, they are *liberal to the poor*, they are *accounted of by the godly*, *&c.* that they are in a good estate, and shall be saved.

(2.) *True signs misapplied.* Thus many times men mistake in judging of themselves; though the rule they go by is good, yet, falsely applying it to themselves, they take that which they find in themselves to be another thing than it is. The rule is good, but the *qualification is not found in them.* That rule which does indeed condemn them, they do justify themselves by: so they justify themselves by those signs of trial, of love to the brethren,

brethren, hatred of sin, believing in Christ, concluding upon some mistakes that it is so with them.

*Fifthly,* Let us consider *how such self-righteous men do hide it from themselves that they trust in their own righteousness.* For the Scripture does so plainly witness against justification by works, that if they saw that they trusted in their own works, that alone were enough to dash all their comfort ; so that there is a necessity in places of gospel-light, that such men do add this delusion to the other, to *persuade themselves that they do not make their own righteousness the foundation of their confidence.* Hence self-righteous men please themselves that they believe in Christ : they trust in their own righteousness, and yet fancy that they trust in the righteousness of Christ. And this they do by *such pretences as these* :

1. They pretend that they do not trust in their own righteousness, *because they are convinced that their own righteousness cannot save them.* They are satisfied that their own works cannot justify them before God : they think the opinion of the *Papists* is sottish and irrational ; they are settled in that doctrine, that works cannot justify them : but this may be, where men's confidence is in their own works. There are none among us that do think that works can save them, yet there be multitudes that do put their trust in their own righteousness. The reason of this is, because men seek salvation by mixing the *covenant of works* and *grace* together. They reckon that works alone cannot save them, yet they reckon that they will contribute much to their salvation : they think that works are no sufficient of themselves for their salvation,

tion, but yet they think they have a great stroke in their justification. They think their works do gain God to be willing to save them, and there is somewhat of merit in them, yet they judge they will not do *alone* without grace and the righteousness of Christ. Rom. ix. 32. "They sought it as it were by the works of the law."

2. They pretend that they do not trust in their own works, for though they do take encouragement from them, *yet it is only as they are signs of a good estate, not as the foundation of their faith.* They say that ministers do commonly give men *signs* from their works and qualifications to try their good estate, and so does the word of God; and we find, that holy men in *Scripture* have laid great weight upon them, and they are not to be blamed for that; that is not a self-righteous spirit. But many men that make this pretence, do make them the foundation of their faith, for they take their first encouragement from hence to come to Christ; and dare not come when they can see nothing in themselves to encourage them.

3. They pretend that they are not seeking salvation by their own righteousness, *but they are only labouring after a work of humiliation, to prepare them for Christ.* They have all along been instructed, that there can be no true faith without a foregoing work of *humiliation*; and therefore they only wait for that work, in order to their coming to Christ: but men do greatly deceive themselves in this thing. A natural man may have a work of humiliation, but a natural man cannot heartily seek after it; for every unhumbled sinner is striving a-

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gainst the work of humiliation. They are opposing of it, either by endeavors to set up a righteousness of their own ; seeking in that way to escape condemnation ; instead of yielding to God, they are flying to their strong holds, sheltering themselves in their prayers, reformations, desires, *&c.* ; or else by wrangling, as a person pursued, runs away until overtaken, and then he fights : so the sinner when he sees that he cannot save himself, is contending with God, objecting against divine proceedings, thinks that God's dealings are very hard measure, Rom. ix. 19. In both these methods they *oppose* the work of humiliation : and when a sinner thinks that he is seeking after the work of humiliation, he is opposing it. He is indeed striving against the work of humiliation, when he is seeking of it, as much as when he is seeking to strengthen and increase his desires and affections : for indeed, he is *making a righteousness of humiliation,* he labours after it, that that may commend him to God. He thinks that would ingratiate him with God : he looks at humiliation as an eminent piece of righteousness ; as a castle that would shelter him from the wrath of God : He looks upon humiliation as a choice frame of spirit ; he looks on it as a great attainment. So that those that stay away from Christ under pretence that they are not humbled, and are waiting for a work of humiliation, are seeking salvation by *their own righteousness.*

*Sixthly,* Let us consider the *vanity of mens trusting in their own righteousness.* Men do please themselves with an idle dream, when they put their confidence in their own righteousness. All that they gain by it, is to go the more pleasantly to hell. Mens own righteousness

is but a *sandy foundation* to build upon. The *hopes* of such men *shall be cut off*, and *their trust prove a spider's web*. It is a needless thing for men to trust in their own righteousness; there is foundation enough for faith without that. There is no need of our own righteousness to draw the heart of God to us: the love of God is free and independent. There is no need of our own righteousness to satisfy the law for us: Jesus Christ has done that fully. There needs no addition of our own to perfect his work, and it is a *vain* thing for men to trust in their own righteousness: they idolize it, and give it an honour that does not belong unto it. Yea such persons do cast great *reflections* upon Christ, as if he had laid down his life to no purpose; they cast *disparagement* upon God, they despise the love of God in sending Jesus Christ, cast reflection on him, as if he might have spared that cost; they do what in them lies to make the death of Christ in vain. Yea it is a *dangerous* thing; men think it is a great venture, to depend upon the righteousness of Christ; but it is a desperate venture, for men to depend upon their own righteousness. Such, whose eyes God has opened, would not for a thousand worlds venture their souls upon that foundation. There is not only hazard of miscarrying, but certain ruin in that way. The expectations of such men will end in miserable disappointment. Though *Paul* had done as much for God as any man alive, yet he durst not entertain such a thought, as appearing before God in his own righteousness, Phil. iii. 9. "That I may be found in him, not having mine own righteousness which is of the law." He that trusts in his own righteousness, takes as certain a course to ruin his own soul, as he that lives in ways of unrighteousness. This appears, 1. God

1. God has *made no promise to you in this way*. There are promises made to them that trust in the righteousness of Christ, but there is not a syllable that way to those that trust in their own righteousness. It is a presumptuous thing for any man to promise himself salvation, in such a way wherein God does not promise it to him. God indeed in the covenant of works, does promise life upon the account of perfect obedience: but what is that unto you, who are destitute of that obedience? who neither have nor ever can fulfil the condition of that covenant? God also promises salvation in the gospel to those that are *sincerely godly and righteous*; but where does he speak one word of saving them upon the account of their own righteousness, or to save those that confide in their own righteousness? God is wholly silent as to any such promise. If there were such a promise, there would be no foundation for faith. But God gives no encouragement unto men to depend upon their own righteousness, which he would certainly do if that were a way of safety; for God undertakes in his word to direct men the right way to heaven. If this way had been right, God would not have neglected to have promised salvation to them in this way: besides it has been God's manner all along, to deal with man in the way of a covenant; to the end, that men may be encouraged to walk in the right way to the obtaining of good, and honour him by exercising faith in his word. God's manner is to propose conditions to men, and give them assurance of the benefit in that way. He never left mankind to guess at the way of salvation, and to contrive by their own wisdom a suitable way to bring them to heaven, the wisdom of man is utterly insufficient to any such work. God

knew

knew his own mind, what way pleased him, and has bound himself unto man in that way. When he first made man, he entered into a covenant with him, and when that covenant was broke, he presently proposed a *new covenant* to him. It is no part of the work of man to devise a way of his own head to lead to heaven, but to walk in that way that God has prescribed unto him: but when men trust in their own righteousness, they go without book; they have no word from God to warrant their way, they lean unto an invention of their own. This is like the practice of *Jeroboam*, that "kept a fast in the month that he had devised in his own heart," 1 Kings xii. 32, 33. Men in this way do venture their souls upon a fancy of their *own*. God gives them no assurance that he will accept them in that way. Men have only their own judgments of it, that this is a way of salvation; God has not told them that this way satisfies him, and answers his expectations, but men guess that this way will do. Men venture it, as if they were able by their *own* understandings to determine what way would please God; and needed not any revelation in the word. They stay not for a promise, but boldly venture upon God without one. What madness is it to desert the way that God *directs to*, and take a way of *your own?* as if you had found out a better way to heaven than God tells you of. You have an imagination that this way will do; but is it not a *daring thing* for men to venture the eternal state of their souls upon an imagination of their own? It is great *folly* for men to neglect the way wherein they *have a promise*, and trust in one wherein they have *none*. You act in this, as if you did not matter though you should perish. It is strange that

men

men should in a matter of such importance, go upon such slender ground. If you should be mistaken in your judgment, what way pleases God, your souls are lost; and if you should miscarry in this way, it would not be strange, for you had no warrant from God for it. You may miscarry, and God be faithful, God is under no covenant engagements unto you in this way. Is it not strange, that men should be shy and scrupulous, and afraid to trust God in such a way wherein they have his *solemn promise* and yet bold and daring to rely on him in such a way wherein he has given them *no encouragement* ? herein preferring their own judgment before the covenant of God.

2. *God has declared against that way*. It is a presumptuous thing to trust in God without his word, but more presumptuous to trust in God *against his word ;* and thus these men do. For God in his word has abundantly witnessed against this way. God sends men word from heaven, that this way by men's own righteousness is insufficient for salvation : He tells us, that that was the reason of the miscarrying of the Jews, " because they sought, as it were by the works of the law," Rom. ix. 32. He reproves men for conceitedness of their own righteousness, Rev. iii. 16. He tells them that if they seek justification by the law, they are fallen from the covenant of grace," Gal. v. 4. He tells them that " no man living can be justified by the works of the law," Gal. ii. 16. Rom. iii. 20. He tells them, they will be ruined in this way ; " Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, and compass yourselves about with sparks, walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled, this shall ye have of my hand, ye shall lie down in sorrow," Isaiah L. 11.

11. He declares, that they are cursed that do so, Gal. iii. 10. "As many as are of the works of the law, are under the curse." How dare any man then thrust himself upon God in this way? Is God wont to discourage men from their duty, and threaten them in way of safety? Will men believe the vain imaginations of their own hearts, before the positive declarations of God's word? Do men think that God reproves them when he is not angry, and threatens them in jest? Does God speak one thing now, and will he speak another at the day of judgment? Is there one rule given for conscience to judge by here, and another for God to judge by hereafter? Will God curse those at the day of judgment, that he blesses now, and bless those that he curses now? "Will he not judge the secrets of men according to the gospel?" Rom. ii. 6. Men are *too timorous* when they dare not trust in God in that way that he has proposed and commended unto them, and men are *too bold* when they trust in God in that way that he condemns. What assurance can they have of acceptance, where the word of God gives them assurance of the contrary? It is madness to challenge life in such a way as God has witnessed against. What reason can men give of such declarations, if there were any bottom for faith in their own righteousness? You have a strange kind of faith that will venture upon God, though he witnesses against you. What comfort can men take in such a way? Men had need of strong arguments to satisfy themselves that that is a way of *salvation*, which God calls a *way of damnation*. Would God discourage them from it, if it were indeed a

way

way of salvation? Can men expect that God will deny his word in the day of judgment to save them?

3. It is *against the rule of justice* for men to be saved in that way. It is against the justice of the law. The law puts in an unanswerable objection against the salvation of such men; the law allows the salvation of those that believe on Christ, Rom. iii. 26. It has not a word to gainsay; but it stands as a flaming sword to keep other men out of paradise. In a way of confidence in man's own righteousness, there is no way to reconcile the justice of God and men's salvation: if men be saved in such a way, what will become of the *law*, and what will become of the *justice* of God that stands engaged to fulfil the law? What warrant have men to expect salvation in such a way, wherein God must part with his own *glory*, before he can bestow glory upon them? wherein he must deny nature, before he can satisfy their expectation? How can men think that God is so in love with their performances, as to *pervert judgment* for their sakes, and pull them into heaven by force, though the law does positively declare against such proceedings? God would not save believers but with the leave of the law, until care was taken that *that* might be satisfied; and will he save these men to the overthrow of his law, and everlasting reproach of his justice? The righteousness of the law does not admit of their salvation. For,

(1.) The law requires *that the curse be executed for sin.* The law pronounceth the sinner accursed, Gal iii. 20. "Cursed is every man that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them:" the

law

law pronounceth the sinner an heir of death, Rom. vi. 23. And it is a most vain imagination for man to think the law will take up with obedience instead of the sufferings of death. *Disobedience brings the curse*, but *obedience* cannot *remove* it. Obedience would have prevented the curse, but obedience cannot remove it. The law makes no mention of obedience for satisfaction; obedience is a thing of another kind than the satisfaction which the law demands. The *active obedience* of Christ could not satisfy for our sins; and how can men think that that obedience which was due to the law, if we had never sinned, can satisfy for our sins? that the paying of that natural debt which we were born under, will also satisfy this new debt which we have contracted by sin? especially when our obedience is so defective, that in that we are again deserving damnation.

(2.) The law requires *perfect obedience in order unto life*. Gal. iii. 12. "The man that doth these things shall live in them." It is perfect obedience, for it is such obedience as is not mingled with sin. If there be any mixture of sin, then the person is exposed to the curse; but it is impossible that a person should at the same time be an heir of the curse and the blessing; of hell and heaven; but there is no man in this life that does attain unto perfect obedience. Those that put their trust in their own righteousness, do not perform right obedience; their obedience is only the shell and carcase of obedience; their best works are not only sinful, but properly *sins*, for they are acted by a spirit of *lust* in all that they do. *Self-love* rules every unregenerate man. Rom. viii. 8. "They that are in the flesh cannot please God." And the obe-

dience

dience of the people of God is greatly tainted with sin. The saints do many things that are sins, and their best duties also are sinfully defective; sin cleaves to them. Besides the positive workings of sin, they cannot perform any inward act of grace *with their whole soul*, as long as the soul is imperfectly sanctified, 1 Kings viii. 46. "There is no man that sinneth not."

Quest. *But is not God above the law? may not he dispense with his own law, and save sinners notwithstanding?*

*Ans.* The law does derive all its authority from God; but *he is not so above the law as to disannul it, and act contrary to it.* God may not contradict the law. To say that God is above the law, so as to dispense with it, is to say that God is above himself. The law is God's law, and he will own it. To set God against the law, is to set God against himself. The law is nothing else but an everlasting rule of justice, that God has made between himself and man: and the Lord will not suffer any violence to be done to his law: every jot and tittle of the law must be fulfilled, Mat. v. 18. There is no such *gospel* as overthrows the law; Rom. iii. 31. "Do we make void the law by faith, God forbid, yea we establish the law." If the law might have been dispensed withal, there had been no necessity of Christ's death. It was upon that account that Christ died to answer the demands of the law; and why should God be prodigal of the blood of his Son? If man might have been saved by God's sovereign dispensing with the law, would God have put Christ to such sufferings? Christ must suffer, that so the law may be satisfied; and indeed the consciences of men will never have peace till they see there.

law answered. *Conscience* echoes to the law, and if enlightened, will condemn where the law condemns. As long as the law curses, conscience will curse too; there is no quieting of conscience as long as he sees the law against him. The reason is, because the law is the voice of God, 1 Cor. xv. 56. "The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law." The law makes sin to have such power, to sting and torment the conscience.

4. This way of salvation by men's own righteousness *is contrary to God's* PROVIDENCE *in providing a perfect righteousness for us in Jesus Christ.* God has prepared a righteousness to our hand by Christ Jesus, Dan. ix. 24. "He brings in everlasting righteousness." This righteousness is altogether complete, and there is no defect either in the doings or sufferings of Christ; and it was for us; Heb. x. 14. "By one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified." And it was by wonderful providences this righteousness was provided for us. This is the most observable and *glorious work* that ever God did in the world. This lay much upon the heart of God from everlasting, 1 Pet. i. 20. "He was foreordained before the foundation of the world:" And is the most remarkable among all the births of time. Besides other providences for the accomplishment of this, there were those *two* exceeding *eminent*, sc. *the incarnation of the Son of God*, whereby God became man, a mysterious work, and of infinite condescension; wherein the greatest glory is bestowed upon the *human nature* of Christ, that any creature is capable of. The *other* is, *God's inflicting his wrath on Christ Jesus, and executing*

*ing the curse of the law upon his dearest Son*; a thing that would never have entered into the heart of man to conceive of, had it not been revealed unto us. And when we see God making such preparation for the salvation of sinners, and in so costly a way providing a righteousness for them; may we not conclude that they stood in *necessity* of this righteousness, that they were incapable of providing one for themselves? Surely we had no ground to conclude that they were in a perishing condition, and would be lost forever, if God did not take care for them. Who would imagine that these sinners could provide a righteousness for themselves, and earn their own salvation? But these are the workings of the hearts of self-righteous men. And herein you cast an ill imputation upon the *wisdom* of God, in troubling himself to provide a righteousness for you, when with some assistance and strengthening from him, you could provide one for yourselves. Men herein are reproaching of God, as if he had put himself to needless expense; they are blemishing this great work of God, as if it were in vain. God has *set open a fountain to wash in for sin and for uncleanness*, but they hope to wash themselves clean enough by their own *tears*. God has set up a *ladder* whose foot stands upon the earth, and whose top reacheth unto heaven; but they hope to *build a tower* whose top shall reach to heaven, and clime up that way. God has provided himself a *sacrifice*, but these think they can make *atonement themselves*. What do you, but asperse and *blemish the infinite wisdom* of God? as if he took a great deal of care, & were at a great deal of cost about that that signified nothing, and troubled himself with vast expence to make a way to heaven, when there was a better path before.

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Sure God who is infinite in wisdom would not have provided a righteousness for sinners in Christ, if they could provide one for themselves. This providence of God does speak you to be under a dreadful mistake, Gal. iii. 21. "If there had been a law given that could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law." Rom. viii. 3, 4. "What the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us." Gal. ii. 16.

5. This way of salvation by men's own righteousness *is cross to God's design.* The great design of God in pardoning and saving of sinners, is to *glorify the riches of his grace;* to let the world understand what a gracious God he is. God has other methods to glorify his other attributes. By the creation of the world, by his giving of the law, by eternal punishments upon wicked men and angels, he glorifies his *power, wisdom, holiness and justice;* but notwithstanding these works of God, the *pardoning grace* of God lay hid. But he has contrived the salvation of sinful man, as for the farther manifestation of his other attributes, so in special to make known the riches of his pardoning and saving grace: Eph. i. 7. "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgivness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." Eph. ii. 7. speaking of the benefits we have by Christ, he gives this as the reason, *that in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness towards us through Christ Jesus.* And this way of salvation by Christ, is a proper means for the furthering

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of this end. Though Christ has purchased pardon and glory for us, that does not hinder the manifestation of God's grace, for though our pardon and salvation be a due debt in respect of Christ, yet it is a *free gift* in respect of us. Though there be a purchase, yet not by us but God sent his Son to make that purchase for us ; Rom. vi. 23. " The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." But when men seek salvation by their own righteousness, they seek it in a way directly repugnant to the design of God. This is a way to exalt themselves, and to rob God of *his glory*. When men trust in themselves, they glory in themselves ; they boast in their own excellency, and not in the free grace of God : " for if it be of works, then it is no more grace," Rom. xi. 6. The self-righteous man does cross God's end ; if he should attain salvation in that way, God would miss *his aim*. The self-righteous man takes a course to dash the counsels of God to pieces, and make the design that was upon his heart in the salvation of sinners come to nothing. He seeks to overthrow this glorious contrivance of God, for the advancement of the *glory of his grace*. If man should have salvation as the fruit of his own earnings, and the reward of his own deservings, man would be blessed, but the glory of grace would not be manifested. God's design would fall to the ground, and the counsel of his heart forever miscarry : but " the counsels of God stand forever, and the thoughts of his heart to all generations." Can it enter into the heart of any man to conceive that God will not be true to his own design, but gratify the humours of men, by saving of them in such a way as is destructive to it ? surely men are horribly stupid to ex-

pect salvation in such away as will not stand with God's design. Whatever hopes of this kind men feed themselves with, they will end in disappointment; if such men be not disappointed, God must be disappointed.

## CHAP. IX.

### USE II. *Examination; Whether men do believe in the Righteousness of Christ?*

USE II. TO put you upon the EXAMINATION, *whether you do put your trust in the righteousness of Christ?* If so, then you are in a safe condition, and may stand before God another day with comfort. In the *great day* of the Lord, multitudes that have made a profession of religion will miserably fail of their expectations; and that upon this account, that they want the *wedding garment:* but although you have many failings, yet if you believe in Christ, " you shall not be confounded, 1 Pet. ii. 6. All your religion signifies nothing as to your salvation, if you do not believe in Christ. If you would know then what you are like to meet withal at the the *day of judgment*, whether you shall find acceptance with the Lord, when thousands shall not, try yourselves by this, *whether you do believe on Jesus Christ?* There be some other way of trial, from all *those things that do accompany salvation!* but this is the principal way, to which indeed all others are reducible. There be other *properties* that are evidential of a man's safety; but this is the foundation evi-

dence,

dence, as that which gives him his right and title to salvation; 1 John v. 13. "I have written to you that believe on the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life." Examine therefore, whether you do indeed believe on the Son of God? There be many that "say they have faith," Jam. ii. 14. there be many pretenders to faith; there is as much deceit in the heart about faith, as about any other grace; there are imitations and resemblances of faith, such as the Scripture does give the name of faith unto, Luke viii. 13. "which for a while believe." All sorts of men that make profession of the doctrine of salvation by Christ, profess this. Profane men profess this, and self-righteous men profess this. Men that were never sensible that God was indeed angry with them, and men that do imagine that they have pacified him, are both of them pretenders to faith in Christ. Men that do indeed trust in that they never did much provoke God, and men that trust in that they have pleased him again, do both make profession of their faith in Christ. Therefore it stands you in hand, strictly to *examine*, whether you do indeed believe in the righteousness of Christ?

And you may try it these several ways;

1. *By the foregoing work of humiliation.*

2. *By the manner of the soul's first closing with Christ.*

3. *By the living a life of faith on Christ Jesus.*

4. *By that holiness that does accompany and flow from faith in Jesus Christ.*

1. Try

1. Try your faith by the *foregoing work of humiliation.* There is a *preparatory* work necessary before a sinner's closing with Christ: this is a work that comes between the rest of the soul in sin, and the sinner's accepting of Christ. Men do not *immediately* step out of a condition of *quietness in sin,* into a state of salvation. A tree must first be prepared before it be laid in the building; the bodies at the resurrection must be prepared before life be put into them; so the heart of a sinner must be first prepared, before it be united unto Christ: Acts ii. 37. and ix. 4, 5. and xvi. 29, 30. And hence the call of the gospel is particularly directed to them that are prepared; "To such as are athirst," Isaiah lv. 1.; "To such as are weary and heaven laden," Mat xi. 28. Not but that it is *other* mens duty also to believe; but because it is *their* next and *immediate work* to close with Christ: whereas it is other mens *next work* to come off from the *world,* and out of *themselves,* in order to their closing with Christ.

There are *two things* of this preparation. The *first* is a *work of awakening,* whereby the sinner is convinced of a present necessity of peace and reconciliation with God; whereby he is put upon a diligent use of all means in order to his salvation. The *other* is *humiliation,* whereby the sinner is brought out of himself, and off from all his *carnal confidences,* to yield himself a prisoner to God. Until the soul be thus humbled, he is not capable of faith. Men will not come to Christ, till they are convinced of an *absolute necessity* of Christ. Men will never take salvation as a gift of free grace, until they are convinced of the necessity of the free grace of God.

God. "They that are whole need not the physician, but they that are sick," Mat. xi. 12. And they that conceit themselves whole, do conceit that they do not need the physician. Men that do not come off from all their own confidences will not put their confidence in Christ; and therefore until men have this work of humiliation, God does not open their eyes to see the offer of the gospel. So that whatsoever faith men have, that have not had a work of humiliation, their faith is not of the right kind: for this is the manner of God, whenever he has fully prepared a soul for faith by a work of humiliation, then to infuse faith; and many times he does it presently. When he has by the wonderful work of his spirit prepared a sinner for Christ, he does bestow Christ upon him: though I dare not say there is any direct *promise* made to humiliation in the Scripture. A man is not an heir of the promises till he does believe: yet universal experience does confirm it. It seems to be in this case as in the work of nature; when the child in the womb it prepared for a soul, God does always infuse a soul into it, though there be no such promise; so where the sinner is prepared for faith, God does infuse that.

In order to your making use of this trial, we shall consider *what* this work of *humiliation* is, and the *manner* how it is wrought.

Quest. *What is the work of humiliation?*

*Ans.* 1. *Negatively* in *two* particulars.

1. It is *not a broken, bleeding spirit for sin.* Many men take it to be so; and when they understand that they

they must be humbled before their coming to Christ, they *strive* after this broken frame of spirit. And when they find but little of it, they complain they are not humbled enough, and give that as a reason why they do not come to Christ. But what sinners find this way, is more like *humility* than *humiliation*. Men think if they could get much of this spirit, they should be prepared for Christ indeed. But this is *quite another thing* from that humiliation that does go before faith.

*Arg.* 1. This appears, because *an unregenerate man cannot truly mourn for sin.* From what principle should he do it before he is born again? He may be grieved for it under other considerations, as it exposes him to a great deal of *misery* here and hereafter, yea as it is in *itself evil*; but not as the greatest evil as it is *against God*. To suppose that a man can sincerely mourn for sin before his conversion, is to suppose him converted before his conversion. It is in regeneration that all the graces of the spirit are implanted in the heart: it is then that the *heart of stone* is taken away, Ezek. xi. 9. While men remain in a state of nature, as they do under this work of humiliation; it is absolutely beyond them to hate sin, or mourn for sin. Nature, improved by common conviction, will never produce this effect. Every natural man *is dead in sin*, Eph. ii. 1. all his works in religion *are dead works*, Heb. ix. 14. There is no inclination in his heart to mourn for sin. Men must have a work of new creation upon them, before they can do this: Eph. ii. 10. "Created in Christ Jesus unto good works."

*Arg.* 2. While natural men *seem to have relentings and breakings of heart for sin, it is impossible but they should put*

*their*

*their confidence therein.* As long as he does imagine that there are any good affections in himself, he will be lifted up with them; these affections will keep him from being humbled. Men will *feed upon these husks* as long as they can get them. There is no bringing of a natural man out of his strong hold, until it be thrown to the ground. A bleeding heart is meat for carnal confidence. There is that spirit of *pride* and flavish *fear* in natural men, that, as long as they can imagine any good in themselves, they will hang upon it; Rev. iii. 17. "Thou sayest thou art rich and increased in goods."

*Arg.* 3. When a man is indeed under the work of humiliation, *he sees he cannot mourn for sin.* He sees his mourning frames are gone: he finds his heart *shut up,* and the pangs of affection, which he some time had, gone beyond recovery. In order to the work of humiliation, God makes men to see their *hard hearts;* and hence, they are wont to complain, when God is about to humble them, that God has left them, and is giving them over to a hard heart. But it is one thing to be judicially hardened; another, to have their eyes opened to see the natural hardness of their hearts. Then a man sees that his heart is a *heart of stone.*

*Arg.* 4. *Mourning for sin is a fruit of reconciliation.* It follows upon the revealing of the mercy of God in Christ. All the sorrow and shame that went before, were merely legal; but *evangelical repentance* follows faith. Men never come to have any genuine mourning for sin before they are converted. All that went before, was in hypocrisy. But a spirit of repentance *flows from faith,* and is peculiar to such as are reconciled, Ezek. vi. ult. "Thou shalt loath thyself, when I am pacified towards

toward thee, for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord God."

2. Humiliation is *not a willingness to be damned.* Some have thought that to be necessary; and that this was humiliation. Some have thought they have attained to this; and it is possible, that, under some strong pang, persons may find *somewhat of this nature,* but certainly they did not know their own hearts in it. Neither does God require any such thing of men in order to their coming to Christ. Indeed, it is *contrary to nature,* for men to be willing to be damned. Wicked men do act as if they love damnation, Prov. viii. 36. "They that hate me love death;" they do so interpretatively. But for men directly and understandingly to be willing to be damned, is against nature. God has planted a principle of *self-love* in men, whereby they do necessarily desire their own happiness; no persuasions can prevail with men not to desire their happiness. We may as soon persuade a stone not to be heavy, or the sun not to shine. There is a weight upon the soul of every man, carrying of it that way; this is implanted by God in the very constitution of nature, and remains in man, in his *corrupt*, and his *renewed* estate. A man must shake off his nature, before he can shake off this desire. Self-love is natural unto man. Man is capable of happiness, and, being capable of it, he stands in need of it. He cannot be satisfied, until his capacity of happiness be filled: hence, he necessarily, and perpetually desires happiness. Besides this, it is *contrary to God's command* for a man to be willing to be damned. For God has commanded us to *seek salvation;* he is often calling upon us to be seeking life, and that with earnestness; Luke xiii. 24. "Strive to enter in at

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the strait gate ;" and this seeking must be with earnest desires. And indeed, when this work of humiliation is wrought in the heart ; he yields, under this encouagement, that there is some hope of salvation in God : hope of life in this way, is one of the things that make him lie down at God's foot. The four leprous men fell unto the host of the *Syrians,* because that was the most likely way for their lives to be preserved, 2 Kings vii. 4. The *Syrians* submitted to *Ahab* in hope to find favor, 1 Kings xx. 31. When the soul is humbled, he is as desirous of salvation as ever ; and it is the hope of that, that has a great influence in his humiliation.

2. *Affirmatively.* It is *an absolute submitting of himself unto God's disposal.* When humbled, *he yields himself into the hands of God,* and makes an absolute resignation of himself unto the will of God ; he yields himself a prisoner. He would have yielded upon terms before, but now he yields *absolutely :* as a rebel, when he sees himself conquered, yields ; so does the soul to God.

This carriage is opposite to his carriage before.

1. He does not *seek deliverance from himself ;* he yields to God, *despairing in himself.* He does not feed himself with vain hopes, and carnal confidences any longer ; those hopes have all died away. His strong holds that he trusted in, are thrown down. He does not stay any longer upon his *affections, reformations, victories over corruptions, &c. ;* he has no dependence upon any *strength of his own,* to gain any thing that will commend him to God. He has no dependence on ordinances, on his own wisdom to discover any way of help ; but he

throws up all his carnal hopes as vain, and submits himself to mercy, Luke xv. 17.

He *leaves off quarrelling with God.* Before he was humbled, his heart wrought within him ; he could not bear the thoughts of it, that God should cast him off; his heart *rose up* against God, and he thought he had hard measure from God. His sins were all *decreed ;* he had done what he could ; he took great pains, and yet God did not shew him mercy. His heart rose, to think that God should make him to damn him ; save and pardon others, and reject him. But now his *mouth is stopt,* he is silenced, he lets fall all his pleas, yields it to be *fair* for God to cast him off: he says as *David,* Psal. li 4. "Against thee, thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight, that thou mayest be justified when thou speakest, and clear when thou judgest."

Quest. *In what way is this work of humiliation wrough, and the soul brought to submit himself to God ?*

*Ans.* In general, it is wrought *by conviction.* It is not wrought by the infusion of any new principle into him; the soul under this work, is in a state of nature ; *neither* is it wrought by *mens own endeavours.* Humiliation is not the fruit of man's industry, but is a thing forced on him by conviction. As men under the first work of the Spirit, are by conviction forced to *fear ;* so, by a work of conviction, they are compelled to *yield* themselves to God. Their *strong holds* are pulled down, and they necessitated to *resign* themselves. God works this work by conviction.

Particularly,

Particularly, 1. By *giving him experience of the failing of all means*. He sees no other way left. He has been trying to wring himself out of the hands of God; he has been turning every way, and refuge fails him. He sees all his carnal hopes fall flat to the ground; his carnal hopes vanish and die away. He has been *waiting for light, and behold obscurity*. He has been trying all conclusions, every way he could devise and think of, turning every stone: he hoped, by his *prayers*, to make his heart better, and by his *fastings*, and by his *watchfulness*. Sometimes he thought, if he had more terrors, that would do; sometimes if he had more encouragements, then his heart would be better. He has tried the utmost of his skill upon his heart. Sometimes he hoped, that, in time, his heart would grow better; sometimes if he could hear such a *minister*; sometimes, if he could get such a *good book*, that others had got much good by; then his heart would mend. The sinner is like a *man lost* in the woods, that thinks, if he steers such a course, that will bring him to the path; and, if that fails, he thinks, if he steers such a course, that will do; but, at last, he can contrive no longer, but is utterly lost in his own sense. So the sinner has had many contrivances, but all his projects fail: upon experience, he finds himself, after all his pains, under the reigning power of sin; and that he is spiritually dead. He thought he had made some proficiency; but now he finds, by experience, that the life of sin is whole within him; and that he has no power nor disposition to any thing that is good. He had enlargements formerly, and thought he could delight in *Sabbaths*; but God is pleased to *withdraw those encouragements* that he

he had, and suffers the corruption of his heart to break out; and upon that occasion, his affections wither away; that discourages him; his heart dies within him, and he has no more strength. Now he sees he cannot love God, mourn for sin, &c.; and hereby all his vain hopes of mending his own heart, fall to the ground. Rom. iii. 9. "Sin revived, and I died."

2. By convincing *of the strictness of the law.* This is another thing that helps to make him yield: God convinces him of the rigour and exactness of the law. He imagined before, that his duties would *make amends* for his sins; that God would be at peace with him, because of his *affections.* But God shews him, that the law stands for *perfect righteousness*; that the law must be fully satisfied; that the law pronounces a *curse* for every sin; that it can neither be abrogated nor *moderated,* but must be fulfilled; that the law curses "every one that continues not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them," Gal. iii. 13. And hereby the sinner sees the *insufficiency of all his duties,* and is brought to *despair* in himself.

3. By *leaving a hope in the heart, that God may yet help him.* This conduces much to make the sinner yield; there is a secret hope that God leaves in the heart, that God will have mercy upon him. God leaves an apprehension in men, of the possibility of their salvation. If they do not yield, there *is certain death;* but there is some hope that God may spare them. They have some hopes arising from the *power* of God; he can make dry bones to live: And from the *mercy* of God, whose *thoughts are not as mens thoughts,* nor *his ways as mens ways,* but *high above them, as the heavens are a-*

*bove the earth:* That also begets some hope, that there is a way of salvation by Christ; that others have found help, when they have been in such a case; that there are promises of "taking away the heart of stone," Ezek. xi. 19. This *hope* helps the soul much, in submitting to God.

4. By *discovering his own sovereignty.* Men are greatly offended at God's proceedings, and unsatisfied about his decrees and providences; and this hinders them from submitting unto him. But God, by his Spirit, lets in some discovery of his own *sovereignty*; and thereby convinces them, that God does them no wrong; that God may bestow his grace where he pleases; that he has dominion over his creatures. This makes the soul confess with *Job*, Job xlii. 2. "I know thou canst do every thing." The soul standing convinced of these things, can do no other, *but yield up himself into the hands of God.*

Before I leave this way of trial, I shall answer *two scruples* that may arise in the hearts of some of the people of God, about their *humiliation.*

1, Doubt. *I fear whether I had a thorough work of humiliation. I never saw so much of the wickedness of my own heart, as some others do speak of.*

Ans. 1. *There is no necessity of seeing all those sinful inclinations that are in the heart particularly.* There is a *great variety* as to the particular discoveries that God makes to divers men: And one great occasion of it, is, the *different temptations* that they are under. Some

see more of a *worldly* spirit ; some more of a *froward* ; some more of an *aspiring* spirit. A man may have discoveries of his own heart, after he hath been a saint many years, that he never had before. If a man see the *fountain*, it is sufficient, though he do not see all those various channels wherein it may run.

2. *There is no necessity of seeing particularly their inability to every duty.* They must feel themselves *spiritually dead* : they feel themselves *unable* to do any thing that is good. But some men can speak abundance, more particularly to their inability to this and that duty, than others can. There are some duties that did not come into their thoughts at that time. It is necessary they should lose their sense of their ability to any thing ; should *not be conceited* of any power or sufficiency. It is not enough for men to see that they can do nothing of themselves. Men may say *that*, when they only find need of assistance, and not of the infusing of a principle of grace into them ; but it is sufficient, if they feel themselves *spiritually dead*. But there is no necessity, that, at that time, they must particularly take notice, of their inability to love God's people, to be thankful, &c. though often they do : their thoughts are wont to be fixed, at that time, on such particulars as they were wont before to *pride* themselves *most* in ; and such as they have special occasion at that time to think of, from what they *hear* or *read*.

3. *There is a necessity of seeing so much of his own heart, as to make him despair of mending it.* To see it wholly under the *power of sin*. A man may see abund-

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ance of corruption and wickedness in his own heart, and yet be a stranger to it. Though he sees a great deal, yet, if he imagines that he can cure it; if he have hopes of getting victory over it, he will not be humbled; Isa. lvii. 12. "Thou art wearied in the greatness of thy way, yet sayest thou not, there is no hope; thou hast found the life of thy hand, therefore thou wast not grieved." Before he be humbled, he must see himself altogether under the power of sin, Rom. vii. 9.

4. *There is a necessity of seeing so much, as to set him down that God may righteously cast him off.* A man may see much, and yet not yield it, that it is fair for God to reject him. One foundation of quarrelling, is, an opinion of what he is, and has been doing. This breeds a *great deal of wrangling* in the heart, Isa, lviii. 3. He is excusing of himself, because he would be better, and has *taken pains* in God's service; so that there is a necessity that he should see so much of his own *wicked heart,* as may quite silence him; that he may see himself *inexcusable,* that he may not have a word to say; but may be satisfied in God's proceeding, if he should cast him off, Luke xviii. 13.

Doubt 2. *I fear whether I have had a thorough work of humiliation, because I never found so much opposition to the yielding of myself into God's hands as some others speak of. Others have more dreadful risings of heart, and more horrible sturdiness of spirit, and bore more dreadful terrors before they could be brought to yield, were much longer opposing and resisting, than it was with me. Somewhat this way I found, but not so much as others, and therefore I fear whether the work were true.* Ans. 1.

Ans. 1. *Men have had a great deal more of opposition to this work of humiliation, than they take notice of, or understand.* All those methods and ways that men take, to *establish a righteousness of their own*, are from a spirit of *opposition* to this work of humiliation. All mens endeavours to get any thing to commend them to God, are the workings of this spirit. Mens flying to refuges of lies, and hiding themselves in the strong holds of their own righteousness, are, because they are not willing to submit to God. All mens strivings to obtain the favour of God, by their *prayers, affections, reformations*, are upon this account, that they are not willing to yield themselves to be lost. Why do men strive to earn their own salvation, but because they are unwilling to submit to the *mere mercy* of God?

2. *Some men are naturally of a more stubborn spirit than others*; and upon that account they feel more dreadful opposition: though every natural man is equally under the power of sin, yet they are totally so. If the *disposition to sin* against God, does neither increase nor decrease in *natural men*, yet *particular evil dispositions* do. Some men, by reason of their *temper*, are of a more stubborn spirit; and, in other cases, are wont to be more difficult to yield either to God or man, than other men; and that is one reason, why they, in this case, do experience more opposition.

3. There is a great difference in the rising of mens hearts against yielding to God, *from the different manner of God's dispensations* to them under this work; especially in *three* things.

1. *Some*

1. *Some men had abundant more confidence that they were in a good estate, than ever others did arrive unto.* They were strongly persuaded that they were converted, had had *abundance of joy* under the apprehension of their good condition. And when these hopes come to be pulled away from them, it is no wonder that their hearts work exceedingly; they "are like the troubled sea, that casts forth mire and dirt."

2. Some men, when they are emptied of their own righteousness, are *left more upon the borders of despair than others are.*—There is a secret hope that God does sustain the hearts of all, by an hope rising from the power of God, and the deliverance he has wrought for others, &c.; in *some* there is *more* of this hope, in others, *less.* The more there is of this, the more this work of submission is facilitated. An enemy will sooner yield, where he has more hope of mercy, than where he has less. The less hope men have, the more difficult their submission will be. That made the *Syrians* yield, because they looked on "the kings of Israel as merciful kings," 1 Kings xx. 31.

3. God does *discover his own sovereignty sooner* unto some, than others. The conviction of *that,* is the thing that silences the heart, and makes it bow. That brought down *Job's* spirit, Job. xlii. 2, 5. The soul will not yield till convinced of *this;* and God is pleased to deal with men variously as to this: some he convinces sooner, and thereby prevents much of those stubborn workings, that otherwise would be.

2. The *second way of trial,* is by the *manner* of the *soul's*

*soul's first closing with Christ.* There is a great difference between *saints* and *hypocrites* in their first venturing upon Christ. Though there be a similitude, yet there is also a dissimilitude. Some persons, indeed, through negligence, lose the *distinct remembrance* of this, which occasions much darkness afterwards; but a false heart does not experience such things in his first receiving of the gospel, as a sincere heart does. There are some things that are *common* to one and to another; but there are other things that are *peculiar* to the *people of God.* If the manner of their closing were the same, their faith would be the same: the manner of receiving is such, as doth *distinguish* them. Take it up in *such particulars,*

1. *The soul is assured of the truth of the gospel, by the spirit of God.* Before, the soul was full of doubts and questions; but when he closes with Christ, he is assured of the truth of the gospel. The reason that men do not entertain the truth of the gospel, is, because they are not assured of the truth of it; when they believe the truth of it, then it works effectually upon them; 1 Thess. ii. 13. "Ye received it not as the word of man, but (as it is in truth) the word of God; which effectually worketh in you that believe." When the soul first closeth with Christ, it is satisfied in the truth of the gospel.

In the consideration of this, we may take notice of *three* things,

(1.) That, at this time, the *soul knows the truth of the gospel.* He had the notion of it before, but now he *sees* it to be so indeed; it is a *real* thing unto him; there is a light let into that soul, discovering the truth of the gospel.

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The soul has not indeed, at that time, an actual and distinct consideration of *all the fundamental truths* of the gospel, so as to yield a particular assent to every one of them; but all those foundation-truths are *radically* made known at that time: that is, there is that *light* put into the soul then, that will make him yield an assent to all those truths, when he comes to have the actual consideration of them, 1 John ii. 26. "Ye have an unction from the holy One and know all things." And, at this time, the soul has the actual consideration of some foundation gospel-truths; such as, the infinite free mercy of God, the virtue of the blood of Christ, or the like; and sees such things, as neither his *own reason*, nor *Satan*, could make him to apprehend. And, although the soul has not the actual consideration of all foundation gospel truths, yet he sees so much at that time, as satisfies him in the *truth of the gospel*. For the knowledge of the truth of the gospel does not depend upon the knowledge of all those things which must be true, if the gospel be true. The knowledge of some particular gospel-truths, may abundantly satisfy a man's heart, that the gospel is true, so as to encourage him to *come to Christ*. And, although the soul, at that time, does not give a particular assent to all those gospel-truths which are the *pillars of our faith*, yet he does *reject none*. The truth of the gospel is discovered unto him, and that, not only in general, that there is salvation in Christ for them that come unto him; but also, in *particular*, that there is salvation for *him*, if he will accept of it. He sees that there is salvation for the most *unworthy*; he sees, also, that this is offered by God unto him. That there is that *preciousness* in *Christ*, that *freeness in God's grace*, that *faithfulness* in God's word;

that

that is a sufficient encouragement unto him to venture his soul on Christ. His eyes are opened, to see that there is safety for him, notwithstanding his unworthiness. He thought he believed the gospel before, but only did not know that God called him; but now he sees gospel-principles in such a manner, that he is satisfied that God called him, and that he may venture upon Christ.

(2.) The soul has, at this time, *an assured knowledge of the truth of the gospel.* It is not an opinion or conjecture arising from some *probable* appearances, but an *assurance.* Therefore they say, "We believe and are sure," John vi. 69. The soul sees that it is certainly so. God gives us, *outwardly,* great assurance of the truth of the gospel; and, at this time, the soul has *inwardly* an assurance of it. It is very true, there is a *difference* in the measure of assurance, that one has, and another has: all assurance is not in the like degree. We read sometimes in Scripture, of an *assurance,* 1 Thess. i. 5. of "a full assurance," Heb. ix. 22. of "all riches of the full assurance of understanding," Col. ii. 2. This assurance, in the first closing with Christ, whatever degree it is in, does not remove the habit and principle of *doubting;* though it does *so mortify it in part,* that it never recovers its strength again, yet there will be frequent returnings of this spirit of doubting; it will attend a saint less or more, as long as he lives: And many times, in the first closing with Christ, the assurance is not in such a degree, but that there will be actual doubting; the workings of a *spirit of fear* are not wholly removed; some doubtings and misgivings of heart are consistent with assurance. A man may see, that it must needs be so;

that

that it cannot be otherwise; and yet immediately have recoilings of spirit: But the assurance the soul hath of the truth, so far *prevails over all his doubtings,* that he can venture himself in the arms of Jesus Christ.

(3.) The soul is assured, at this time, *by the Spirit of God,* that the gospel is true; and the messages of salvation certain. "The Comforter shall convince of righteousness," John xvi. 10. The *Spirit* works a principle of faith, and draws it into act; sanctifies the reason and understanding; and discovers the glorious excellency of God, whereby the heart is assured; indeed this assurance cannot arise from any *other cause. Natural reason* will not assure men of this: for the reason of man is miserably corrupted, and cannot see such spiritual things; 1 Cor. ii. 14. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned." Indeed, natural reason, from Scripture principles, may strongly argue the truth of this way of salvation against the *Papists,* and other heretics; but natural reason cannot satisfy men about those scripture principles: yea, though natural reason be enlightened by a common work of the Spirit, so as to be *greatly affected* with the gospel for a time; yet it cannot assure a man of the truth of it. Neither is it possible for *Satan* to work any such assurance in men. Men are sometimes afraid, whether the discovery they have had, were not the delusions of the devil. But, though the devil may comfort false hearts, and fill them with joy, yet he cannot assure men of the truth of the gospel; for he can only raise those principles that are in men, and not put a new prin-

ciple of faith in them; whereby it is, that the truth of the gospel is discerned. Neither can the *devil* give a discovery to the soul, of the glorious nature of God, or excellency of Christ, so as that the heart should trust him, love him, &c. Satan can make no such discoveries to a natural man, as a natural mind is incapable of receiving; so that this assurance is the *peculiar work* of the *Spirit*.

From this particular, we may conclude the faith of *two sorts of persons* to be *false*; on this account, that they never have been *assured of the truth of the gospel*.

(1.) Such as are persuaded of the truth of the gospel *only from tradition*. The bottom of many men's persuasions, is the profession and judgment of such men, among whom they live. This is the doctrine that they have been *bred up in*; the principle that their parents have taught them; they abhor to have any thoughts to the contrary, because they have been educated in this way; upon the same ground that a *Mahometan* and *Papist* is tenacious of the religion of his country: and as the *Heathen* were wont to stick to the religion of their forefathers, Jer. ii. 11, 14. Mic. v. Upon this account many receive the gospel; and this may be a great advantage to men, because they are brought under means, and are kept from prejudices against the gospel; but this *persuasion* cannot be true faith. Men cannot be assured of the gospel upon this foundation; this can only be the bottom of a strong *opinion*, and conjecture, not of assurance.

(2.) There is also another sort, whose faith does appear from hence to be unsound; namely, *such who believed that God meant them in the calls of the gospel, because*

*cause*

*cause they found some good affections in themselves.* If their hearts had been dead and unsavoury, they could not have thought that God called them ; but the foundation of their believing that they were invited, was, they found *some goodness* in themselves. But, certainly, this was built upon conjecture, and an opinion of their own ; and therefore they could not be assured of it. They had no assurance that they were called : though they might have a strong confidence, yet they could not be assured from thence that they were invited.

2. In the first receiving of Christ, the soul comes to him, *merely upon the encouragement of the call of God in the gospel.* God invites sinners, in the gospel to come to Christ, and many ways urgeth them so to do ; and from *thence* the soul takes its encouragement.

There were many other things that encouraged them *before* to wait upon God for converting grace ; as, the power of God, God's converting of others ; his strivings with him by his Spirit : But the thing that is his encouragement to come to Christ, is the *call of the gospel.* He sees his *warrant* in the call of the gospel ; the call of the gospel is the foundation of his faith : that is the reason of his faith, that God calls him in his word. The call of God does contain in it sufficient *encouragement* to believe. For therein God shews his *readiness* to save sinners ; therein he shews, that there is a way of salvation prepared for them ; therein he binds his *faithfulness* to them, and lays bonds upon himself to save them, if they come to Christ : And this is the encouragement to them

to believe, Acts xiii. 48. "They glorified the word of the Lord; and as many," or, it may be read, "such, as were ordained to eternal life, believed."

For the right undestanding of this,

Consider, 1. It is *indifferent* with this first closing with Christ, *whether the soul takes notice of the call to believe,* as *God's* call or *Christ's call.* Some souls in their first closing, take notice, that Christ calls them; others that God calls them. And it is no material thing which of these ways it be; if either the soul hear God, or hear Christ calling him, the answer to that call is true faith. For there is sufficient warrant for us to come, either from the voice of God, or the voice of Christ. This is an abundant demonstration of it, that the call of the gospel is sometimes propounded to us in Scripture, as the call of God, Jer. iii. 22. Gal. iii. 15. 2 Tim. i. 9.; and sometimes it is propounded unto us as the *call of Christ,* Rev. iii. 18, 20. There is this difference between them, that Christ calls us by an authority derived from God. God does derive his authority from none. But Jesus Christ, *as Mediator,* does derive his authority from God. But his authority is a sufficient warrant, Matt. xvii. 5. "Hear him." And hence ministers may indifferently invite men in the name of God or Christ, 2 Cor. v. 20. "Now, then, we are ambassadors for Christ; as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."

There is no necessity that, at the time of the soul's receiving of Christ, he should be *reading or hearing the*

*call*

*call of the gospel.* It is by those calls; but many times they do not prevail while a man is hearing of them, but *afterwards.* Sometimes it is in the very time of hearing, Acts xiv. 1, 2. Acts ii. 41. but it may be as well afterwards: it may be in time of *prayer,* and often is, or in *meditation.* God does it for them that wait upon him in his ordinances, but not always in the time of ordinances. Thus it is with other works of the Spirit, awakening of sinners, comforting of saints, &c. Mat. xxi. 29. "He said I will not, but afterwards he repented, and went."

3. There is no necessity that this closure with Christ should be wrought *by the letter of the Scriptures.* Frequently it is by some *particular word;* but it is many times *otherwise.* Sometimes the thing is urged by a *minister,* according to the *Scripture,* and God makes some sentence that he speaks effectual, Acts xvi. 31, 32. So sometimes in meditation, God makes men see the general call of the gospel, though no particular place be pitched upon. Thus it is sometimes afterwards with *saints.*

4. There is *no necessity* that the particular word that draws the soul to Christ, *should be in the form of an invitation.* It is many times so, as by those words, Mat. xi. 28. Rev. xxii. 17. but it may be by any other gospel expression; as by those words, 1 Pet. ii. 24. "Who bore our sins in his own body upon the cross." Isaiah liii. 6. "He was wounded for our sins, and bruised for our iniquities." Eph. v. 2. "He hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God of a sweet smelling savour." It may be wrought by any gos-

pel *precept, promise, declaration.* God, by any such word may let in a light to shew the soul the truth of the gospel call.

From *this particular* we may conclude the faith of *two sorts* of persons to be *false.*

[1.] Such as ventured at first upon Christ *from that encouragement, that God loved them.* They thought that God had a love for them, either from his *outward providences*; he smiled on them in his providences, and blessed them and heard their prayers: or, he manifested his love to them by restraining their corruptions, and keeping of them from such evil practices as others are addicted unto; or else from some *inward comfort* that God has given them. God gave them some inward comfort when they were in a sad condition, and from thence they conclude the love of God; and so are bold to venture themselves on Jesus Christ. They have had some inward joy, and that they make the foundation of their faith. And so they quite *pervert* God's order, they get first a *faith of assurance* that God loves them, and then they have a *faith of dependence.* But the particular love of God is *not the foundation* of our faith, there is *no need of knowing that* in order to believing. The love of God is to be cleared up by effectual calling, 2 Pet. 1. 10. God's love to the soul is a secret, until he does believe. Eph. i. 13. "After ye believed, ye were sealed with the holy Spirit of promise." God may reveal the love he has to a man, unto some other, before the man believes; as the love God had to *Jacob,* was revealed to *Rebecca,* but not to the man himself. God's particular love is not the foundation of faith, but the *call of the gospel.* [2.] Such

[2.] Such as ventured first upon Christ *upon that encouragement, that they loved God.* They found affections to God and Christ, and that made them think that God meant them in the call of the gospel; that made them think that it was not presumption for them to come to Christ; that made them think that God would not reject them. Their *first* encouragement rises *from themselves,* and then in a *secondary* way they take encouragement *from the gospel;* that adds to their encouragement. But this faith is a rotten faith, it has not a *right foundation.* Such a faith may make men live more comfortable here, but it will deceive them, Rev, iii. 17.

3. In the first closure with Christ, there is *such a light let into the soul of the sinner, that he cannot but come to Christ.* When he does come, there is a necessity upon him to come. It is thus many times, very remarkably afterwards, but eminently so at first. Before he comes, he cannot come, and when he does come, he *cannot but* come. The sinner has at that time such a supernatural light let into him, that he is under constraints to come to Christ. All the wit in hell cannot persuade him to stay away. Where God begins to open the eyes, there may be some objecting; but before God has done, the light is so full, that the soul is carried captive by it. Ministers are required to "compel men to come in," Luke xiv. 23.; that is, to use compelling arguments; such as, when God sets the same home, will compel men. The light that God puts into the soul at that time, is such that he cannot withstand it; it silences all his carnal reasonings; stops his mouth, answers his objections; so that he cannot stand out any longer. John vi. 45. "Every one that has been taught and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me." This I clear up from *these considerations.* 1. *All*

1. *All that have this inward light and teaching do come unto Christ.* It is very true, there is an illumination that is not effectual to work faith, Mat. xiii. 20. 2 Pet. ii. 21. But there is an inward light that is always attended with faith. Such men as have a thorough conviction of the gospel, do ever close with it. That light that is sufficient in order to faith, is always efficacious: the inward call of the gospel is always answered; Rom. viii. 30. "Whom he called, them he also justified." All those that *God draws*, do *run* after him, Cant. i. 4. They that *know Christ*, will *come* to him, John vi. 45. Psal. ix. 10.; and this shews that they cannot but come; if this inward light could be resisted, some would resist it. Among so many thousands, some would refuse to come. This way would not be universally successful with men of all tempers and inclinations, if it did not necessitate them; some or other would be found that would refuse.

2. This inward light is said *to come with power* upon the soul. It has a persuading, overcoming power with it. It has power to gain the will, and draw the consent of the heart. The gospel, where the spirit does inwardly teach, has a prevailing power; therefore it is called "a rod of strength," Psal. cx. 2. It comes with power upon the heart, 1 Thes. i. 5. When God convinces men of the truth of it, it always *works effectually* upon them, 1 Thes. ii. 13. Let but the truth of it sink into a man's soul, and Christ will be *precious* unto him, 1 Pet. ii. 7. The light of the gospel turns about the wills of men, Psal. cx. 3.

3. If the *sinner could stay away from Christ, the corruption*

*ruption of his heart would make him stay away from Christ.* If men were able to stay away, they would not be able to come. There is a great deal of *opposition* in the heart of a sinner to believing in Christ; men are as great enemies to the gospel, as they are to the law. Sinners are dreadfully averse to come to Christ. How many objections and cavils have men to keep them from Christ? How many by-paths will they turn into before they come to Christ? How much sorrow will they endure before they come to Christ? Phil. iii. 18. Rom. x. 3.; and this opposition of heart would not suffer them to come, except they were made to come: if they were not under a necessity of coming, they would stay away.

4. It is *against nature*, when men have this inward light let into them, *to stay away from Christ.* There is a principle put into every man in his first creation, to *seek his own happiness;* and however the nature of man be corrupted, yet that *principle* is not lost, but remains *strong* in men; however they *mistake the way*, yet the desire of all men is happiness. The Devil blinds men, and tells one, that *this* is the way, and another, that *that* is the way, but still they are driving in end *that design*, Psal. iv. 6. "Who will shew us any good?" And therefore when the Spirit of God shews a man that Christ is the way to happiness, that there is salvation in Christ, he cannot but come to him; John vi. 68. "To whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life."

5. When the sinner comes at first to Christ, *this inward teaching of the Father works such affections, that he cannot but come.* When his eyes are opened, his affections

fections are so wrought upon, that he cannot but come. When he comes out of *darkness into light*, his heart is *affected* with the sight of Christ, and he cannot stay away. There are *three affections* that are wrought upon. One is *hope;* he sees a hope of blessedness if he comes to Christ; he sees in that way hopes of pardon and glory, Heb. vi. 18. "Who are fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope that is set before us." Another is *love;* when the soul comes to see Jesus Christ offering himself, he cannot but love him, and look on this way of salvation, as a glorious way; he despised Christ before, but now he changes his mind, he prizes him; 1 Pet. ii. 7. "To them that believe, Christ is precious." And then it works on *fear,* he dare not lose the opportunity; he does not know whether he shall have another call; so that he dares do no other than take God at his word.

Object. *This seems to overthrow the liberty of man's will if he cannot but come to Christ, where is his freedom?*

*Ans. Liberty* does not consist in an *indifferency* unto *contrary acts or objects.* Sometimes indeed men have such a liberty, but that is peculiar to some cases. Liberty is not opposed to *necessity,* but to *force.* The will cannot be forced by an external violence, but it may be *necessitated* by *reason* and *conviction.* Natural men sin voluntarily, yet necessarily; they reject the gospel voluntarily, John v. 40. yet necessarily, John vi. 44. Saints in heaven love and serve God necessarily, yet freely: so it is here, Psal. cx. 3. "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power."

From *this particular,* we may conclude the faith of *such*

*men*

*men* to be *false*; as have *made a faith of their own.* Convinced sinners, hearing they shall certainly be ruined that do not believe in Christ, and that they that do believe shall be saved, set themselves in their own strength to work up their hearts to this duty, and, after a while, imagine that they have *got the victory*, and have *prevailed over their belief*, and wrought their hearts into a closure with Christ. This faith is *not right.* It is very true, that after a man has been converted, he may, in this way, by God's assistance, come to perform *renewed* acts of faith: but it is never thus in the first closure with Christ. At first, God lays a necessity upon men, they cannot but come to Christ, Eph. i. 19, 20. "What is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward, who believe according to the working of his mighty power which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead." When the sinner comes indeed to Christ, he is compelled to come, Luke xiv. 23.

Before I leave this particular, I shall answer *two doubts* in the hearts of some *saints* from hence.

Doubt 1. *I fear my closing with Christ is not right, because, after God let light into me, I objected a while before I yielded; the light did not at first overcome me.*

Ans. *Many times* when God comes with that inward call of the gospel, *he does not at one instant let in such light as does overcome all objections*; but after God begins to bring the call home to the soul, there are some *strugglings* of unbelief before, he yields. Sometimes

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the light is such, that it strikes *all objections* dead at a blow ; some times it answers them *gradually* : The light breaks in fuller and fuller, till at last it quite overcomes him ; as in *Moses'* call.

Doubt 2. *I fear my closing was not right, because when I came first to Christ, I had a fear, and trembling on my heart ; I had not such full satisfaction as some have ; but crowded through difficulties.*

Ans. *Some have more clear light than others,* but every one that comes, *has so much that he cannot but venture.* Though there be remaining darkness, yet they have so much light as overbears them ; that their hearts are carried out to rely on Christ, and that is sufficient ; Rom. vi. 18. "Who against hope, believed in hope."

3. The *third way* of trial is, *by living a life of faith on Jesus Christ.* They that have *received* Christ by faith, do not satisfy themselves that they have believed, but do, from time to time, *live a life of dependence on Christ.* This life *Paul* lived, Gal. ii. 20. "I live by faith in the Son of God ;" that is the duty of them that have believed, 1 John v. 13. "I have written to you that have believed on the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may believe on the Son of God." And this is the *spirit* of those that have believed ; they live a life of dependence upon Christ for every thing, even for *outward* things, for life, health, peace, liberty, provision, protection, for private and public blessings, but in *special,* for *sanctification, acceptance,* and *eternal salvation.*

For

For the *opening* of this, we may consider,

1. *What are the actings of faith that believers are exercised in.*

2. *Under what considerations are those actings of faith drawn forth.*

3. *The condition in which a believer is exercising faith.*

Quest. *What are the actings of faith that a believer is exercised in?*

Ans. 1. *Assenting to this doctrine of salvation by Christ.* The gloriousness of Christ's person and offices, the virtue of his sacrifice, the readiness of the Lord to save sinners by him, the readiness of God to accept of him through Jesus Christ. The believer receives these things *as the word of God,* 1 Thes. ii. 13. While other men are dissenting, looking upon those things as *cunningly devised fables*; or withholding their consent, as being uncertain reports, that they have not sufficient assurance of; the believer acknowledges these things to be so indeed. The report of the gospel is entertained by him; he does not look upon the things as *doubtful,* but the things are *real things* to him; he does not look upon them as things that may be, or are likely to be true, but things that must be. The declarations of God's word concerning these things come with *authority* upon his heart. He is satisfied that things are so. He is not afraid that there is deceit in the bottom, and that he is abused in these reports. He does not demur and hesi-

tate about them, but they are firm conclusions in his breast; they are as real to him, as the shining of the sun, and the burning of the fire: So *Luke* says of the passages of Christ's life and death; they are things which are "most surely believed among us," Luke i. 1. They look on them as *certain;* they are persuaded of the truth of them. Others are *afraid* whether they be so or not, but a saint is persuaded of them, Heb. xi. 13. They are to them as if they saw them with their eyes; John viii. 56. "Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and saw it and was glad." He saw the day of Christ's incarnation and passion; it was above two thousand years off, but he *saw* it as if it were present. Faith makes things *evident:* while others are at a loss about things, and cannot tell how to be satisfied, they are in the dark, and perplexed with surmises; faith makes the things plain and evident to believers, Heb. xi. 1. "Faith is—the evidence of things not seen."

*Accepting of salvation by Christ.* It is offered to him, and he receives it. The believer takes the tender with all his heart; while other men stand disputing whether they may, he boldly runs the venture of it; while others are waiting for more encouragement, and are frighting of themselves with the reasonings of their own hearts, he is thankfully accepting of the offer. He sees a door open, and he ventures to go in. Carnal reason tells him it is dangerous; that he need be advised what he does: but let carnal reason say what it can, he will venture the case. He deserts all other proffers, and puts himself into this *castle,* and ventures his life in it. He puts to sea in this *bottom*; embarks himself here, let

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what storms will come; he parts with all for this *jewel*; and has his whole dependence upon this. He forsakes *all other lovers,* and accepts the tenders of Christ. Carnal reason tells him, he will bring himself to misery; but he is willing to venture it. He relinquishes *all other hopes,* and puts himself into the hands of Jesus Christ. He says, as *Paul,* "It is a saying, worthy of all acceptation, that Christ came into the world to save sinners," 1 Tim. i. 15. He flees for refuge to Christ when conscience is pursuing of him; thither he betakes himself, Heb. vi. 18. He gets under the shadow of Christ, and ventures himself upon that protection which Christ will give him. When he hears what is to be said on all sides, he makes choice of the offer of Christ, and ventures himself with him; he refuses other offers, and takes this, Jer. iii. 22. "Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backsliding: behold we come unto thee, thou art the Lord our God."

2. *Viewing and beholding the excellency of Christ.* As one that trusts in a castle, he loves to be viewing and taking notice of the strength of it, the thickness and breadth of the walls; so he that trusts in his own righteousness, loves to ly poring upon the multitude of his services, the fervour of his affections, the pains he has taken, and other things that set forth the excellency of it: Thus, he that *believes in Christ,* loves to be considering the *excellency of Christ,* and of his righteousness, feasting his eyes in beholding of him. Thus we are commanded to *consider him,* Heb. iii. 1. And this is the spirit of a believer. He is solacing and satisfying

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of his soul in the contemplation of Christ's righteousness; his heart dwells in consideration thereof. An unbeliever stands poring upon his *unworthiness*; thinking how many sins he has been guilty of; what occasion of anger God has against him, discouraging his soul by minding how unworthy he is; and he is still harping upon the greatness of his provocations. But a believer is of another spirit; he is refreshing of his heart, by taking notice of the glorious excellency of Christ's righteousness, and what wonderful security arises from thence. Sometimes he thinks how God chose this way of salvation before the foundation of the world. Sometimes how God has poured out his anger upon Christ: how their sins have been imputed unto Christ: how God reckons the sufferings of Christ theirs: how this way of salvation was shadowed forth to the ancient church: how the people of God, of old, have placed their faith in the righteousness of Christ. There are a *multitude* of such *considerations* that the heart is dwelling upon, Cant. v. 10. *&* *seq.* "My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest of ten thousand."

4. *Prizing of Jesus Christ.* The believer makes great reckoning of Christ, 1 Pet. ii. 7. He believes all those *glorious characters* that God gives of Christ: and so he prizes him; makes great account of the blood and righteousness of Christ, and of all the offices of Christ. He looks upon his *own righteousness* as *nothing*, in comparison to the righteousness of Christ. He reckons himself poor, notwithstanding any thing of his own; he counts himself undone without Christ. But he prizes Christ, looks on him as the *author of eternal salvation*, as the procurer and bestower of all good. He has all his ex-

pectations

pectations from him; all his hopes are built on him. He has a *great esteem* of Christ; he looks for no good but only from him: his hopes of outward mercies, of light and strength, and deliverance from temptation; of pardon, and communion with God, and eternal life, are all derived from him. He looks upon Christ as the stay and staff of his life; he prizes him, as having his whole dependence upon him; he looks upon himself as miserable and undone without him. He counts an interest in Christ of more worth, than all the gold of *Ophir*. He esteems the blood of Christ of sufficient virtue to purge away every sin, and the obedience of Christ sufficient to procure all manner of good for him. He sees *peace* in him, and *victory* in him, and *life* in him. As a man prizes bread, because that preserves life: as a sick man prizes a skilful physician: as a man prizes his money, because that is virtually all things here; it is meat, and drink, and clothes, &c. *Money answers all things*: so does the believer prize Christ; he sees all things virtually in him; he sees he has perpetual need of him; he prizes him as the only way of happiness.

5. *Being satisfied in Christ.* The believer sees enough in Christ to answer the needs of his soul; there is a *fulness* in Christ; his soul *finds rest* there. He does not see any need of his own righteousness to commend him to God's acceptance; he is satisfied in the robes of Christ's righteousness; he sees there is no need of his, to make him beautiful in the eyes of God. He is satisfied in this *bread of life*, and he finds no necessity to *feed upon husks*. Other men imagine a need of something of their own, to ingratiate them with God, and to procure

their acceptance: they dare not trust in Christ alone, but are laboring to piece out his righteousness with theirs: And when they hear the tenders of grace made through Christ, they are not satisfied, but are looking out for something else to encourage them; they dare not trust in *this alone:* but the believer is satisfied in Christ, and he throws away *all other confidences,* both as *vain* and as *needless.* He finds no want of any other righteousness to justify him, and carry before God; he does not regard nor desire any of his own to commend him to God's acceptance. He sees there is ground enough of encouragement in Christ; Phil. iii. 3. "We rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh;" 1 Cor. ii. 2. "I have determined to know nothing among you, but Jesus Christ and him crucified."

6. *Counting this way of salvation a glorious way.* This way of salvation pleases God; it is a way that he has chosen; and this way pleases the believer: he likes it, and is taken with it; it is a glorious way in his eye. He has an high esteem of this way; he counts it an excellent and *glorious way,* as it is a way of *safety;* all other ways that men have imagined and devised, he despises them, as deceitful, as mere traps and snares for the souls of men; as ineffectual unto the end proposed. But his soul does magnify this way, as that which does answer the end; and will effect and bring about that salvation, that it is proposed in order to. He is affected with this way, as it is a sure way that will not fail those that trust therein; 1 Pet. ii. 4. "To whom coming, as to a living stone." He is affected with it, that God has laid so strong a foundation of the salvation of his people,

that

that they cannot be disappointed of it: and he counts it a glorious way; as thereby the *glory of God* is much advanced. In *this way*, the *glorious mystery* of the *Trinity* is made known. In *this way*, the *excellent skill and workmanship* of the Lord is seen, in repairing the ruins of mankind, and raising up of man from the gulf of misery, unto the pinnacle of happiness; in finding out a way to reconcile his own glory, and man's salvation; in bestowing blessedness upon man, in such a way, that *free grace* shall have all the glory. In this way, the *wonderful love* of God does appear, in this costly way of salvation; upon this account, the soul is taken with this way of salvation as a way that will much advance the glory of God. We should have been great strangers to God, and have seen little of his glory comparatively, had it not been for this way of salvation. It is pleasant taking notice of the beamings forth of God's glory in this way; Rev. v. 13. "Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power be to him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb, forever and ever."

7. *Rejoicing in Christ Jesus.* The believer finds a great deal of joy in Christ; he solaces himself in the thoughts of the righteousness of Christ. While others are rejoicing in the sparks that they have kindled, he *sits under the shadow of Christ with great delight*; his heart is many times raised with the discoveries of Christ; sometimes his soul *is filled with joy and peace in believing*, Rom. xv. 13. "Believing, he rejoices, with joy unfpeakable, and full of glory," 1 Pet. i. 8. Sometimes he can triumph in Christ over all the enemies of his soul. While others are boasting in themselves, what duties they have done, what frames they have attained, what

service

service they have done to the cause of God; the believer is making his boast of Christ, *glory in his righteousness.* The soul can triumph in that, notwithstanding all matter of discouragement; Rom. viii. 34. "Who is he that condemneth? it is Christ that died;" 1 Cor. xv. 55, 56, 57. "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? the sting of death is sin, and the strength of of sin is the law, but thanks be to God that giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Quest. 2. *Under what considerations are these actings of faith drawn forth.*

*Ans.* There be *many considerations* which the hearts of believers do pitch upon, which draw forth the exercise of faith. As the considerations that unbelief fixes upon, are very many; only here, *mind this,* that *where* the Lord makes *one* encouraging consideration, powerful upon the heart, it is an inlet to many others; and we may reduce them principally to these *three heads*:

1. The heart fixes sometimes on the consideration of *God's mercy.* Faith is drawn forth by the consideration of the merciful nature of God; Psal. xliv. 18. "When I said, my foot slippeth, thy mercy, O Lord, held me up." The soul says, God is of infinite mercy; he can find in his heart to blot out the greatest transgressions; his mercy is greater than our sinfulness; he can overcome all our guilt; Mic. vii. 18. "Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity," &c. Sometimes upon the consideration of the *freeness* of God's mercy; he has no dependence on our worth; he can give life, without any thing in us to draw his heart towards us; Rom. v. 21.

"Grace

"Grace reigns through righteousness, unto eternal life," &c. Sometimes on the *merciful purposes* of God; who has designed to shew mercy upon many of the sinful children of men: he has determined to bring many sinners unto the enjoyment of himself, 2 Tim. i. 9. Sometimes on the *exercise* of his mercy, in *sending his Son* to die for sinners, John iii. 16. Sometimes the thoughts pitch on the *merciful invitations* that the Lord makes to sinners, 2 Cor. v. 20. Sometimes on the exercise of his mercy on great sinners; *Mary Magdalen, Paul,* and others, 1 Tim. i. 16. Sometimes on the tender *love of Christ,* abundantly manifested, when here, on earth. Sometimes the Spirit sets home one of these considerations, and sometimes another; which draws the heart to believe, when under the greatest sense of vileness; Psal. xxxvi. 7. "How excellent is thy loving kindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings."

2. The heart fixes sometimes on the consideration of *God's faithfulness.* That is a mighty stay to the heart, when he has a spiritual sight of the faithfulness of God. When that is fastened on the heart, that makes him receive the promise, whatever improbability there be in it, Heb. xi. 11. When we have to do with a faithful man, we lay weight upon his word; so does the believer on God's. When this consideration of his faithfulness, is fastened on his heart, the soul says, it must needs be so as God promises; for God is a God of truth; it is *impossible that God should lie;* God cannot mistake nor deceive: His word is infallible; his promise cannot fail. Hereby he stops the mouth of carnal reason. God has promised

so and so to us, and promised so and so to Christ; and he is not fickle and inconstant; repentance is hid from his eyes; 1 John v. 9. "If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater." Why should I fright myself with appearances and uncertain reasonings? why should I doubt, though the things are strange and wonderful? though we cannot see the reason of these things, the word of God cannot fail; we may venture our souls on it if they were more worth than they are, Psal. xci. 4, 2 Tim. i. 12.

3. The heart fixes sometimes upon the *sufficiency of Christ.* That comes with mighty power upon the heart; stilling accusations, dissipating fears, drawing the heart to rejoice in Christ; Phil. iii. 10. "That I may know him and the power of his resurrection." Sometimes the Lord fastens it on the heart, that Christ is the way that God has appointed unto life, Heb. x. 19, 20. Sometimes that Christ has "borne our sins in his own body," 1 Pet. ii. 24. Sometimes that justice is satisfied, the law fully answered by Christ; that God may, without any injustice, pardon and save; (Rom. iii. 26.) that the sacrifice of Christ is acceptable unto God; (Eph. v. 2.) that God has fully avenged himself on Christ; (2 Cor. v. 23.) that Christ is our passover, the "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world;" that all the families of the earth shall be blessed in him; that he is our *High Priest,* bearing our names on his breast, in the most holy place. These, and scores of *such considerations,* which the Lord, at times, fastens on the hearts of his people, do wonderfully help them to cast themselves upon Christ, giving him the glory of redeeming them; Rev. v. 12. "Worthy

thy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing."

Quest. 3. *In what conditions does a believer thus exercise faith in Christ?*

*Ans.* 1. When he *is more clearly satisfied in his own good estate.* There are times when the people of God have very comfortable satisfaction, that they are in a good condition; they have comfortable hopes that they are in a state of justification; that God has pardoned their sins, and will save them. These hopes arise from a discerning of their former actings of faith, their sanctification, and that joy in the Holy Ghost which they have had; and, at such times as these, they do live a life of faith upon Christ. When they see their sanctification, they do not build upon that as the matter of their justification; neither do they so live upon any *signs,* as to live in the neglect of acting dependence on Christ; though there is too much of that spirit to live upon signs, and to neglect Christ; yet this spirit does not rule a saint; but notwithstanding his hopes, he is venturing himself upon the *free and gracious offers* of the gospel: though he finds comfort in those evidences, that God gives him of his good estate, yet he is, from time to time, renewing his acts of dependence upon Christ; Cant. ii. 3. "I sat under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet unto my taste."

2. When *he is more in the dark about his condition.* There are times with many, at least, of the people of God, when they are greatly exercised with *fears:* there be

be many things that give occasion of fear to them ; they are afraid, because they see great workings of corruptions ; cannot discern love to God ; they do not find love to ordinances ; seem to grow worse and worse. So they are afraid, because they have not such comforts as other Christians have ; they do not find that presence of God with them, that they think they should have, if they were saints. Many *temptations* they meet withal, that shake their hopes exceedingly. But in this condition they do not neglect to believe in Christ, though, when they are in the dark, they have great strugglings of unbelief ; but they do not cast off their faith in Christ. Their faith has not dependence upon their *signs* ; when signs fail, yet the foundation of their faith remains. Though they see not, yet they do believe. At such a time it is their duty to believe. " When they are in darkness and have no light," their work is to " stay on the name of the Lord," Isa. l. 10. ; and this is their spirit. Saints " live by faith, and not by sight," 2 Cor. v. 7. ; and though they are at a loss what they are, and what they have done, yet they see ground of faith in Christ. Their reliance does not depend upon their assurance ; Psal. lxxiii. 26. " My flesh and my heart faileth ; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion forever."

By this way of trial, we may conclude against *three sorts* of persons, that they *have not true faith*.

1. Such persons as satisfy themselves, *that they have believed in Christ*, and closed with him, *sometime formerly* and do not *live in a way of believing*. They nourish an hope, because they have believed at such a time, but neglect to roll themselves on Christ from time to time. So it is with some dry and unsavoury professors ; they

have

have got an hope from some old works they had upon their hearts many years since; they trust they will carry them to heaven, and do not *live a life of faith,* but live in a wretched neglect of Christ. Many times such men's religion is quite worn out by that time they grow into years, and they are like "salt that has lost its savour," Heb. iii. 14.

2. Such persons as *generally live upon their own righteousness,* but only now and then they *force themselves* to rely on Christ. The general way of their living, is upon their *good frames* and *services;* but now and then they have a sermon against their trusting in their own righteousness; or, it is given as a sign of an hypocrite, to trust in his own duties; and they set themselves to trust in Christ, and they think they do somewhat at it. But their way of living is upon themselves, and they are very great strangers to Christ. This is not the guise of the people of God; Gal. ii. 20. "The life that I live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God."

3. Such persons as cannot venture upon Christ, *when they are in the dark about their estate.* When they think that they see signs that they are converted, then they can believe; they are very forward: but, when in the dark, no *gospel encouragements* will prevail upon them. A saint may find it very difficult at such a time; but a false heart stays till he can discern some more hopes of his good condition, before he can believe: such a man does not live a life of faith.

Before I pass this way of trial, I shall *answer* some *doubts* about it, that sometimes trouble the people of God.

Doubt 1. *I fear I do not live a life of faith, because I find abundance of unbelief; I am exceeding distrustful; see little as I ought to see of the excellency of Christ, of the stability of the covenant, or of the freeness of God's grace.*

*Ans.* It may be so, and yet your faith may be right: there is a backwardness in saints to believe; Luke xxiv. 25, 26. "O fools, and slow of heart to believe." Saints have but a little faith; they that have most, have but a little, Rev. iii. 8. This is the general complaint of the people of God; and generally it is from faith, that they are *burdened with unbelief.* A spirit of *faith* makes men qualified to *discern their unbelief,* and makes men see an heinous evil in it.

Doubt 2. *I fear I do not live a life of faith, because I am very ready to give way to a spirit of carnal confidence: I am sure there is a great deal of false faith in me, if there be any stirrings of affection, I am ready to idolize them, and stay upon them.*

*Ans.* You may possibly think there is more carnal confidence working in you than there is. Hope of your good condition, *should be strengthened* by the *sanctifying fruits* of the Spirit: they are good signs. But I grant you are wont to be *carnally confident;* though your faith be of the right kind, and you live a life of faith, yet you will be troubled with a spirit of carnal confidence, as long as you live; Mat. xiii. 27. Prov. xxx. 6. Where the *apostle* says, "We have no confidence in the flesh," Phil. iii. 3. his meaning is not, that carnal confidence is *wholly mortified;* but their doctrine was, that no confidence was to be in the flesh, and they *allowed none.*

Doubt 3.

Doubt 3. *I fear I do not live a life of faith, because my faith brings me in so little supplies of grace and comfort; God does not seem to own it.*

*Ans.* You *gain* considerably by your faith, if you gain this, to "be kept following of God," 1 Pet. i. 5. You must not be discouraged, because God does not give you such signs as you desire; John xx. 29. "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." The measures of comfort that God gives to his people, are very various; and sometimes God puts his people upon it, against hope to believe in hope: and that is a sign of a good faith, when a man sees but little coming, and yet will believe still; Rom. iv. 18. "Abraham, against hope, believed in hope."

Doubt 4. *I am afraid, because I am so bold to trust in God from time to time, though I have so much sin; I am afraid it is a life of presumption, not faith.*

*Ans.* There is indeed a boldness to trust in God from conceits of *mens worth*, that is *not right;* but there is a *twofold boldness* that God will *never blame* men for. *One* is, the bearing up of their heart with the hopes of God's favor, upon good experience of it, notwithstanding sin. Only you must beware you do not make light of sin, because God has given you such hopes. The *other* is, a depending on Jesus Christ, for the pardon of sin; and accepting God's offer, notwithstanding your sins: yea, though you have not such brokenness of heart, as does become you; Heb. iv. 16. "Let us come boldly to the throne of grace."

4. Try

4. Try the truth of your faith, by that HOLINESS that does *accompany and flow* from faith in Jesus Christ. They that are true believers, do lead an holy life. Holiness does accompany faith; and therefore believers are commonly, in Scripture, styled *saints*, 2 Cor. i. 1. There is a concatenation of graces. Where there is *one* grace, there is *all*. As it is in a natural man, all the natural faculties of the soul do accompany each other; they live and die together; so it is with several graces that are in saints; the *same principle* of grace, does enable the soul to all sorts of holy actions: Grace in the heart is but one principle, though, in respect of its various actings and objects, it does receive *various denominations;* and, wherever faith is, it is accompanied with *universal holiness.* And, therefore, holiness is given as a sign and character of believers; Gal. v. 24. "They that are Christ's, have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts." The actings of faith go hand in hand, with the exercise of other graces. Faith is always attended with universal holiness. Hence there are so *many promises* of salvation made unto those that are *holy.* Though it be faith only that gives men a title to heaven, yet there are promises made unto holiness, because that is a property of believers: And hence, also there are so many *threatenings* unto those that live *unholily;* Heb. xii. 14. "Without holiness, no man shall see the Lord."

And indeed holiness does not only *accompany* faith, but the exercise of it *does flow from faith.* Faith has a great influence into an holy life. The actings of faith upon the *whole word of God,* does greatly quicken a spirit of obedience. It is a spirit of faith that makes all the arguments

ments which the *Scripture* is full of, to *become powerful* upon the heart. Whatever God proposes to us in his word, to make us obedient, it will not have that effect upon our heart, if it be not entertained by faith. Men believe commands, encouragements, threatenings; and so they become efficacious upon the heart. The whole word of God works on men, as it is entertained by faith. All graces are quickened, and drawn into exercise in this way. Men believe and *hope;* they believe and *love;* they believe and *repent*. The will and affections never act in a gracious way, but, when the understanding discovers ground so to do. By faith we understand spiritual things; and so our hearts are carried after them. Whatever grace is acted, faith is acted together with it; and, therefore, in the 11th to the *Hebrews*, whatever the *patriarchs* did and suffered for God, is ascribed to *faith*.

But, as other actings of faith have an influence into holiness, so, in a special mauner, the actings of *faith upon Jesus Christ*. "We are sanctified by faith in him," Acts xxvi. 18. The peculiar actings of faith on Christ, have a special influence into an holy life: and that two ways:

1. The *believing of the gospel*, does, in its *own nature, stir up men to holiness*. When men, by faith, do entertain the *calls of God*, in the gospel, it has a strong impression on their hearts to move them to holiness. When men see the *readiness* of God to pardon them, the wonderful grace of God in the gospel; it prevails with them to lead an holy life; Psal. xxvi. 23. "Thy loving kindness is before mine eyes, and I have walked in thy

truth." The sense of the *grace* of God, apprehended by faith, makes men admire the glorious excellency of God, love God, fear to offend him; troubled that they have grieved him and wronged him. The discoveries of gospel-grace, leave an everlasting *impression* upon the heart, to *love* and *honor* God.

2. The believing on Christ, is *the way* wherein God has *promised to carry on the work of sanctification.* In this way God gives forth the *assistances* of his Spirit for the carrying on of this work. God in the invitations of the gospel, "calls us to glory and virtue," 2 Pet. i. 3. Faith in Christ is the condition of the covenant of grace, and therefore, *thereby* God *becomes engaged* to keep men in the ways of holiness. As all other *covenant mercies* are made over to the soul in this way; so likewise *sanctifying grace.* And besides that God has directed us to exercise faith upon Christ for sanctification. He tells us, that "without him we can do nothing," John xv. 5.; that he is made to us "for sanctification," 1 Cor. i. 30.; that whatever we do in word or deed, we must do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ," Col. iii. 17. This is a *principle means* prescribed unto us in order to the carrying on of the work of *sanctification.* We must attend other appointments and ordinances of God; prayer, reading, hearing, sacraments, watching, meditating, *&c sim.* But we may not trust to any of our own strivings; but especially attend this *ordinance* of the covenant of grace, to depend upon Christ, as being the purchaser and the dispenser of this blessing, waiting for the influence of his spirit; and in this way he assists and strengthens his people to lead an holy life.

For

For the *opening* of this way of trial, we may consider *what an holy life is.* It is a *course of walking in all God's commandments, from a gracious respect unto God.* Here you may distinguish between a *principle* of holiness, an holy *frame,* an holy *action,* and an holy *life.* A *principle* of holiness is a quality enabling and inclining a man to keep all God's commands, out of a gracious respect unto God. An holy *frame* is a raised, prevailing disposition unto holiness; by the habit, it is disposed to holiness; by an holy frame, to a more ready and *cheerful practice* of holiness. When the heart is in an holy frame, it is like an instrument in tune, like a good knife that has a good edge. An holy *action* is an action commanded of God, done out of a gracious respect unto God. An holy *life* is a course of walking in all God's commands, from a gracious respect unto God.

In this description, *three things* are to be minded,

1. That where there is an holy life, there is *a walking in all God's commands.* There may be a reformation of some particular sins, where there is not an holy life; any *one way* of sin makes a man's life unholy. If men allow any way of disobedience, the life is not holy. In an holy life there is an abstaining from every known sin, and the practice of every known duty, Luke i. 6. "They were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless." He that leads an holy life, does observe *all* those *commands* that directs his *outward behaviour* of himself; and he attends all those commands that direct the carriage and behaviour of *the heart.* Those commands that require internal

duty,

duty, love, fear, &c. and those that do require the *right manner* of doing his duty, doing of it for God's glory, doing of it in the name of Christ, doing of it with diligence, with delight. The casting off of any duty, makes the life unholy.

The *principle* of grace that is in a saint, does both *enable and incline* the heart to *keep all God's commands.* There is no command given by God, but there is a suitable inclination in the heart of a saint unto it. There be in the heart of a saint some *general inclinations* to all God's commands; some inclinations that respect every one of God's precepts, that are principles of *universal obedience*; and they are three, *love* to God *fear* of God, and *faith* in God; these three influence a man to all that obedience that God requires; these incline the heart to do every thing that God requires. Hence, sometimes we read that love makes us keep God's commands, 1 John v. 3. So all religion is called the *fear of God*; because that influences all, Isai. L. 10. So *faith* is a general principle of obedience, Heb. xi. 7, 8. And besides these, there are in a godly man, more *particular inclinations* to the commands severally, which are not of such latitude; these are the off-spring of the other. Thus *patience* inclines a man to keep some commands, *temperance* others, *bounty* others, *pity* others; 2 Pet. i. 5, 6.

But this *walking* in all God's commands, does admit of *divers degrees.* All the people of God, in this life, *fall short of perfection,* and some fall far short of that perfection that others do attain. Every one that is travelling in a path, do not travel with equal diligence and speed.

So

So here, some are more dull, heedless and negligent, than others are. And many saints do fall short, in respect of some *outward* commands of some that are but natural men. But every one must have such a measure of obedience to God's commands, as speaks faithfulness; such as speaks a spirit of fear, faith and love. There must not be an heart allowance of any sin. The *conscience* of a natural man *may* allow none; but the *heart* and *will* of a saint *does* allow none. There are many sins which a christian does commit often in a day, as the actings of unbelief, by-ends, worldly affections, and pride; but yet he does not allow them, and his disallowance is seen in acts of hatred towards these sins, repenting of them, watching against them out of hatred, and by his performing contrary actions, namely, of humility, faith, &c.

2. Where there is an holy life, this walking in God's commands, *is in a course.* That is their *way,* and *manner,* and *trade.* Whatever exactness a man may have for a *fit,* that will not denominate his life holy. He that leads an holy life, is in *his ordinary course* attending the rules of holiness, and that not only rules of *external* obedience, but also of *internal;* reaching after the glory of God, labouring to do duties with an upright heart, watchful against the secret motions of sin: Acts xxiv. 16. "And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence towards God and towards man." Such persons as have *pangs* upon their hearts to walk in God's ways, and then *leave off* again, are far from an holy life. That is the spirit of a wicked man, Psal. xxxvi. 3. 'He hath left off to be wise and to do good." None

can

can be said to live an holy life, but such as are in a course of practising the ways of God; & it is thus where there is an inward principle of holiness. Though habitual holiness be not sufficient in order to the practice of holiness without divine assistance; yet God's ordinary manner, is to assist all sorts of principles which he has put into his creatures; and he has promised also special assistance unto grace. So that they that have a principle of grace, are walking in their ordinary course in the way of holiness, Prov. ii. 22. "That thou mayest walk in the way of good men."

But though they that lead an holy life, keep God's commands in a course, yet they are *guilty of continual sinning* against God. The corruption that is in the heart of a saint, is making continual opposition unto holiness. As for the *external* part of it, many a man attends that, that has not a spark of grace; and there is a great deal in a saint besides grace, that helps him to observe the outward part of his duty; pride, covetousness, slavish fear, contribute much to that. But there is abundance of opposition to the *inward part* of obedience, faith, love, &c. And though there be a course of holiness, and time after time an exercise of grace, yet it does not follow, that the inward actings of grace are more frequent than the actings of corruption: without question the case is far otherwise. Though grace, through the special presence of God, is *getting forward*; yet there are in the heart of a saint, abundance *more* of the workings of *pride* than *humility*, *unbelief* than *faith*, *earthliness* than *heavenly-mindedness*. The best of the saints have *but a little strength*; Rev. iii. 8.

Rev. iii. 8. A saint commits a multitude of sins every day; and the actings of grace are few comparatively.

And besides this, though he that leads an holy life, walks in Gods commands in a course, yet he may have *some special fits of sinning*. As he that is wise, may in a fit carry himself very foolishly, so he that is godly, may in a fit carry himself very sinfully. A *meek* man may have a fit of *passion* as *Moses* had; and the *father of the faithful* may have a fit of *unbelief*. There are sometimes, when godly men have strong pangs of corruption, and sin does prevail not only over grace, but over conscience, and respect unto their credit, and every thing that stands as an impediment in the way of it. Corruption may overflow all its banks; and for a time a good man may carry himself very badly. And some of the people of God have more of such *distempered fits* than others have; and they do prevail to a greater height in some, than in others. But these are but fits; the *ordinary way* of a saint is a way of obedience.

3. Where there is an holy life, this course of walking in God's commands, is *out of a gracious respect unto God*. There be thousands of actions that are *materially* good, that are not *formally* so. If they be done merely from *self-love*, they are not good. It is necessary that they be done out of a gracious respect unto God. I rather chose *so* to express it, than to say they must be done for the *glory of God*, because there are some internal actings of grace, wherein the soul *has no end*. Thus when God draws the heart to love him, the man has no end. Thus when the Spirit of God makes a man's heart break for sin he has no design in it; when a man sets himself to mourn

for

for sin he has an end, but when the heart is grieved for sin, he cannot help it. He has no design in that, though he has a motive. And he *ever* has a *gracious respect* unto God; the glorious excellency of God has an influence upon his heart. There are some duties that cannot be done *but from a gracious respect unto God.* There are some holy actions that cannot be done but by a principle of grace; as, to *believe in Jesus Christ,* to *love God,* to *hate sin.* Another man that has not grace, may *imitate* these, but he cannot do them. What faith he has, and love, &c. differs *toto genere* from the faith and love that is in saints. These holy actions cannot be done but by a gracious respect unto God. Selfish considerations may have some influence into these, as God's love to us has some influence into our love to him; but in these actions the soul is principally swayed by a gracious respect unto God, John xlii. 5, 6. And such other acts of obedience as may be done merely upon *selfish considerations,* are done by him that lives an holy life, *principally* upon spiritual considerations, Mat. x. 42. yet in a subordinate way he does, and may make use of selfish considerations, and such as moral men are swayed by: such considera- in their place, are of weight. God urges them in his word; as, the *examples* of men, the *benefit* of holiness, the *punishment* of sin. Men must not condemn themselves, because they have a respect unto such things in their obedience, Heb. xi. 7, 22.

From this way of trial, we may conclude *three sorts* of men to have no true faith.

1. Such persons as *live* from time to time *in obedience*

*unto*

*unto God.* There be pretenders to faith, that live an irreligious and carnal life; if they live not in any sensual lusts, yet are indulging themselves in other sins, regardless of sanctifying the Sabbath, neglecting prayer, allowing themselves in worldliness, pride, malice, and the like. *James* has given us the character of the faith of such men, Jam. ii. 26. "Faith without works is dead." The gospel is a *doctrine according to godliness;* there is no effectual means to purge away sin, than faith in Jesus Christ, Tit. ii. 11, 12. Faith is an *heart-purifying* grace, Acts xv. 9. Those that believe in Christ, have salvation begun in them here, they are saved from the dominion of sin: and therefore those men that do indulge themselves in any lust, are destitute of faith, whatever their pretences be. Whatever they tell of their *comforts* and *discoveries,* they have but a shadow of faith; if they had faith as *a grain of mustard-seed,* those corruptions would be removed. Faith does not work by wantonness, and malice, and sensuality, and worldliness, but by *love,* Gal. v. 6. Such men dream they have faith. Can men believe in Christ, and be *servants unto Satan?* Are men believers, yet *rebellious* persons? Do men receive the *grace,* and reject the *holiness* of God? Do men take *Christ* for their *Priest,* and the *Devil* for their *King?* If faith were in mens hearts, those lusts would never rest there; faith would be purging of them out. Such unholy persons do not *adorn the gospel,* but are blemishes to the societies to which they belong. The *Scripture* gives us an account of the humility, heavenly-mindedness, love, self-denial of believers; and if these men be believers, they are of another kind than the Scripture tells of; such men do *turn the grace of God into wantonness;*

as if Christ came into the world to procure them a liberty to sin without danger, as if the gospel did countenance iniquity. Such men are not guilty of deceiving many others ; if the sinfulness of their ways be known, men may easily tell what their faith is ; and if they were not *stark-blind*, they could not *deceive themselves ;* but if they hope for heaven in this way, they will surely be mistaken. God threatens them with damnation, 2 Pet. iii. 7. They that continue ungodly, will, as certainly perish, as if there were no gospel. Indeed such men are not fit to be saved ; they are not fit for the *company* that is in heaven, for the *comfort* that is there, nor for the *employment* that is there.

2. Such persons as are observing God's commands *only under some pangs*. For a time they set themselves carefully to do their duty, and make conscience of their duty, & *reform* things that are amiss ; & afterwards they wither away again ; and from one neglect, fall into another ; they grow bold to sin, and careless of duty ; ly in the practice of evil. They had a *fit of religion*, but have lost it. Such men have no faith. If men had faith, they would continue in the practice of God's will. " Unbelief makes men depart from God," Heb iii. 12. Faith is a preservative from apostasy, Heb. x. 39. " We are not of them that draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul." Such men as have once been zealous in religion, and now do not regard it, or live in any way of disobedience, have no true faith. Faith will not preserve men from falling, but it will from *falling away*, and from a course of disobedience.

3. Such

3. Such persons as do not walk in God's commands *out of a gracious respect unto him.* Though they be exceeding diligent and conscientious ; yet they are not acted from *spiritual considerations.* They do not duties from a spirit of obedience, and for the glory of God, and from a true sense what a *glorious God* this is. These men have no faith ; for they have no true *holiness.* They have no faith ; for by faith men come to have a spiritual understanding of the glorious excellency of God ; and if they understood that, they would serve him because he is such. And hence, those men that are acted by a principle of *morality* in their religion, have no faith ; and those men that are acted only by an awakened conscience, have no faith. Many men are *terrified* and scared into religion ; out of a spirit of fear, they reform and do duty ; but this is not real holiness. An enlightened conscience is not sufficient to make a man perform any one holy action. Though men abound in duties of religion, yet if it be not from a *right motive,* they have no faith ; for all their duties are but *hypocrisy.* Not only when men make it their great end to get wealth and reputation, but when they make it their great end to get peace of conscience, deliverance from hell, and the joys of heaven : if such things as these be the great things that have an influence into mens religion, God will not accept of it. Faith makes men serve God from a " spirit of love," Gal. v. 9. " Faith—which worketh by love."

Before I pass this way of trial, I shall answer *some doubts* that may arise in the hearts of the people of God.

Doubt 1.

Doubt 1. *I fear whether I have any true holiness, because I see such actings of corruption, as seem inconsistent with holiness and love to God.*

*Ans.* There may be such actings of corruption in a saint, as are *inconsistent* with the *actual love* of God; but men are often mistaken, in thinking that sinful actings are not consistent with the *habitual love* of God. Many times a man sees such workings of grace, as seem to him inconsitent with such sinful inclinations as afterwards he finds in his heart; so it is here: but there is no act of sin, (the *sin against the Holy Ghost* excepted), but is consistent with habitual grace. Whatever lust is in the heart, it may be drawn into act, notwithstanding the being of grace. That grace that does not altogether destroy the disposition, cannot altogether hinder the working of it. There needs no more than the being of grace, to hinder the workings of the vilest corruptions, Jonah iv. 9.

Doubt 2. *I fear, because in those conflicts that I have, sin gets the upper hand; I set myself to carry patiently, and yet am carried away with impatience; and I set myself against such a temptation, and yet am outbid.*

*Ans.* They may be overcome in a particular skirmish, that may overcome in the war. A godly man is many times outbid in his conflicts with corruption, that argues the *weakness*, not the *total want* of grace. Grace is sometimes under the hatches, corruption comes like a storm, and bears down all before it. Corruption does not only outbid conscience, but grace too. If a man throw a ball right forward, the strength of the bias carries it aside.

Doubt 3.

Doubt 3. *I fear, because I find a spirit in myself to seek my happiness in the world, and to mourn for affliction as the greatest evil.*

*Ans.* Every one that has any worldly love, and carnal sorrow, has this spirit. Worldly love is not a loving of the world only, but a *loving of it more than God.* So, carnal sorrow, is not a mourning for afflictions, but a mourning for them as the greatest evil. He that is under the power of worldliness, has this spirit *reigning* in him: But godly men, so far as they are unregenerate, and *acted* by a *worldly spirit,* do prefer the world above God, and make the world their God. The spirit of worldliness is to idolize the world. But notwithstanding this, you may love God above the world, and mourn for sin above any affliction. Though there be a spirit to prize the world above God, yet there may be *another spirit* in you to prize God above all things; and where there is any degree of true love to God, there is a loving of God above all: the unregenerate part loves other things more than God; the regenerate, loves God more than all other things.

Doubt 4. *I fear, because I commit such sins soon again, as I have been mourning for.*

*Ans.* It is true, that *mourning for sin* does *mortify sin,* and leave the heart more fortified against the temptation; yet the same corruption is in the heart still. And sometimes that carnal confidence that grows upon mens mourning, does expose some to the same sin. A man may do that many times that he hates, Rom. vii. 15. The hearts even of godly men are extremely tainted with sin.

## CHAP. X.

### USE III. Exhortation, *To awakened Sinners, to believe on the Righteousness of CHRIST JESUS.*

USE III. IF it be safe appearing before God in the righteousness of Christ, here is ground of EXHORTATION to all such as are *awakened to believe in this righteousness.* Such sinners whose consciences are indeed awakened, are deeply concerned how they shall appear before God. While other men are busying themselves to get worldly comforts, seeking a felicity in this world, and casting off the care of their souls, you are making it your business to get into such a condition that you may be accepted with God; that you may not miss of eternal salvation. It is a matter of trembling to you, to think of being a cast-away; you dread the thoughts of damnation, and are willing to take any pains that you may avoid it. You have been labouring for *peace,* and cannot get it; you have been searching for it as for hid treasures, but hitherto you have not obtained it; you would fain be saved at last, whatever trouble you go through here; though you should be poor in this world, afflicted all your days, if you might be saved, then you have your desire. *Such persons* are exhorted from hence to *venture their souls upon the righteousness of Christ.* It is natural to such men to seek help from their own righteousness; but, beware of that; many a soul has been lost in that way. That way of *self-righteousness* is sprinkled with the blood of souls. Many a man and woman have been undone in taking that by-path. As

you

you desire the welfare of your souls, come to, and accept of Jesus Christ; roll yourselves upon him, make him your stay and your refuge: "Flee for refuge to the hope set before you," Heb. vi. 18. Despair of all other methods of salvation, and trust alone in JESUS CHRIST: let fall all other pleas, as such that can stand you in no stead, and venture the case of your soul upon *this plea* of Christ's righteousness; lay up all your hopes in *Christ*, have your whole dependence upon his righteousness.

Jesus Christ has made a complete purchase of salvation: He has bought off the guilt of sin, and has bought blessedness and life eternal for sinners. And God has stated this *law* of grace, that *he that believes in Christ shall be saved by him*. God has constituted a rule of forgiveness and salvation. God has constituted a new covenant, according to which he will dispense life unto sinners. He tenders a new covenant unto us, according to which we may receive justification from Christ's righteousness. God tells us upon what *terms* we shall have life; he has stated the *method* wherein he will bestow mercy; he has laid out *the way* in the gospel, and declares that "whoever believes on Christ shall have everlasting life," John iii. 16, 36. This is the only way wherein men shall receive salvation from Christ. If men come not to those terms, they shall perish, notwithstanding the purchase of Christ. It is only in a way of believing, that men come to have any saving benefit by Christ; believing in Christ is the condition of the covenant of grace. This is indeed a *suitable* way for our partaking of the benefits of Christ. It is suitable that they should *accept* of the grace of God and righteousness of

Christ,

Christ, that are saved by them. It is very meet that salvation should be in such a way, that the *honour* of God's grace and Christ's righteousness may be preserved. Yet the great reason of God's stating this way of salvation by *faith*, was his *sovereign pleasure*. There was no absolute necessity of this, that salvation by Christ should be obtained in a way of believing. Faith interests us in Christ, but it is not through any *natural virtue* in faith, but by the *free constitution* of God. The influence that faith has into our justification and salvation, is by *God's appointment*. God has voluntarily stated this of grace. There was no necessity that there should be any condition at all laid upon us. God might, without the performing of any condition, have justified us by Christ. As we were made sinners by the sin of *Adam* without our consent, so might we have been made righteous without our consent. But it pleases God to require a condition; which seems to be, *partly*, that we may have salvation in the *way of a covenant*, which is for our *comfort; partly*, to render them that refuse the condition the more *inexcusable*. The pleasure of God is the reason that there was a condition, and likewise that faith is the condition. If he had made love to himself, or sorrow for sin, the condition, that would have carried a face, as if justification were the reward of our works; yet God might have done it, if he had pleased: but he has stated this law of grace, "that he that believeth on him, shall be saved," Acts x. 43. "Whoever believeth on him shall have remission of sins." This is the *covenant of reconciliation*. Therefore, as you do desire everlasting blessedness, venture your souls upon the righteousness of Christ: this is a way of safety.

In

In urging this exhortation, I shall,

1. Present some *motives* before you.

2. Mention some *considerations* farther to enforce those motives.

3. Answer such *objections*, as awakened sinners are wont to make.

1. One motive is, the *great sin of rejecting of Christ*, and not coming unto him. Men have reason to be afraid to continue in unbelief, because there is so much sin and iniquity in it. Many awakened sinners, that do confess and bewail other sins, and speak of them with bitterness of spirit, do not ly under the sense of this sin ; here they are ready to excuse themselves, or justify themselves: they do not take the blame of their rejecting of Christ to themselves : they plead for that, and vindicate themselves, as if it was not their fault ; as if they had not sufficient reason to believe. But herein you are greatly mistaken. You look upon your unbelief to be your infirmity and calamity ; but not your sin : this is a mere delusion. The professed rejecting of Christ, was that which filled up the measure of the *Jews* sins ; and the *heart-rejecting* of Christ, is sin ; John xvi. 9. " The comforter shall convince of sin, because they believe not in me." And, though this heart rejecting of Christ be not a flagitious, yet it is a crying sin. You cannot anger God more by any thing, than by continuing in the neglect of Christ. This is the great controversy that God hath with sinners ; not that they have been guilty of these or those particular transgressions, but that they abide in the rejection of the

gospel.

gospel. You may see the greatness of this sin, by the *many rules* that are broken by this sin, and by the *fountain* of it.

1. See the greatness of the sin, by the *many laws* and *rules* that are broken by it. Men do violate many commandments at once in this sin; it is a complicated iniquity; it is not a single sin, but many evils are twisted together in it; the rejecting of Christ crosses a great many rules; men, by their unbelief, do cast abundance of dishonour upon God, and lie in the breach of many precepts.

There are *many rules* broken by this sin.——For,

1. You break *that particular command, of believing in Christ.* Believing in Christ, is not only according to many general rules, but there is a *special command* for it. We may not only argue this duty by consequence from some general precepts, but here is an express commandment for it; it is, *in terminis,* required. As we are beseeched to believe, and invited, so we are required; John vi. 29. "This is the work of God, that we believe, on him whom he hath sent;" 1 John iii. 23. "This is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ." So that, by neglecting to come to Christ, you break a plain express precept; you carry contrary to the very letter of the word of God. If it were not so expressly set down, there might be more pretence for cavilling; you might have more to plead, that there was some mistake in mens arguing this to be a duty; but now you do oppose a plain *direct precept.* What colour can men have to question, whether it be their duty, when it is set down in the Scipture in so many letters and syllables?

Some

Some awakened sinners that have reformed their former ways of sin, and taken up a course of religion, are apt to please themselves, that they do not live in any known sin; whereas, they live all the while in the neglect of coming unto Christ: but how can you sooth up yourselves with this, when you neglect a plain and express commandment?

2. You *deny to Jesus Christ the honour of his mediatorly office*, and of that *great sacrifice* that he has offered up unto God. God had made Christ Mediator; he has committed the work of reconciliation unto Christ: and Jesus Christ has undertaken it: He was every may furnished for it, and has discharged it; and, upon that account, he is worthy to be depended upon. Faith in him is an honor due to him; Rev. v. 12. "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain," &c. But, by your rejecting of him, you withhold that honour that belongs to him; you deny him the *honor* of having *made satisfaction* for sin. You should honor every one according to their desert; but you *cast contempt* upon his sacrifice, as if it were not sufficient for you. You disparage him, when you are afraid to venture upon him; you cast great reflections, as if there were no such virtue in his death and righteousness, as is pretended: there is a great deal of *despising* of Christ. You belie him; the language of unbelief is, that his *blood* is not *precious;* that it does not cleanse from all sin; that his sacrifice is not pleasing unto God; that the Gold he tenders will not make you rich; that the white raiment he offers will not hide your shame; thus Jesus is slighted and undervalued by every unbeliever; they have low thoughts of Christ, and carry themselves accordingly.

3. You

3. You cast *great contempt* upon the *wisdom of God*, in finding out such a way of salvation. This is a way that God, in infinite wisdom, has contrived; Col. ii. 3. "There are in Christ all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." But you do desert this way, as an unsafe way; you dare not venture youselves in this way, as if God, when he undertook to find out a way to bring sinners unto glory, missed it, and did not discover a way that will do. That commends this way of life to us, that *God himself contrived it;* it is not the invention of man; a thing plotted and devised by any finite understanding, but the contrivance of God himself. But you, by refusing of Christ, carry, as if this were a deceitful way; as if this way did not reach the needs of your soul. This *way* is *chosen of God*, and *refused by you*; as if you understood better than God what you needed.

4. You *refuse wonderful love.* To reject the kindness and love of God is an abuse of it. You ought, with thankfulness, to entertain God's love; but, by rejecting of Christ, you reject the *greatest love* that ever was revealed. Was it not an act of wonderful love, for God to send his Son to die for us? What need had he to be at any such cost? if we had been all damned, what would he have lost by it? We may see in this, how deeply the heart of God *was concerned* in our salvation. He did that for us which would have been too much for us to have asked. We may well wonder that God would be willing to do such a thing for our salvation. It was a great thing for God to be willing that sinners should be saved; but for him to lay out himself so, in order to it, was much more; John iii. 16. "God so loved the world."

world." And again, it was a great act of love for God to make *such a law of grace,* that "he that believeth shall be saved." That he should make so small a thing the condition of salvation; and say to us, as the *prophet* did to him, "wash, and be clean." If God had lain the sorest burdens upon us, and put us upon never so many difficulties, as the condition of salvation, we should have had reason to bless his name; but he only lays this condition on us, to accept his offer. It was great love that God should make this offer *to you;* when he *passes by thousands* in the world, and never speaks a word to them about the way of life, yet opens this way to you, revealing of it, and calling upon you to be saved. He cast your lot, in a time when and where these offers should be made; and the way of life is held forth with all plainness: And when he has snatched others away younger than you, he is yet waiting upon you; keeps knocking at your door; and, upon this account, you are utterly inexcusable in refusing to come to Christ. Shall God be at a great deal of cost and care in order to your salvation, and will you not accept of his Son? Shall Christ make a journey from heaven to save you, and so abase himself; and shall he lose his labour? God, in compassion, has provided bread for you, and will you not eat it, a garment for you, and will you not put it on? Has he sent a *physician,* and will you not accept his help? Are God's bowels yearning over your dying souls, and will you reject his care? Indeed, when you refuse Christ, you despise the *tender love* of God. And that heart is very hard that can slight such tender love. You are guilty of great *ingratitude* that do reject this offer; you are greatly injurious unto God, thus to blow upon his love.

5. You act *contrary to self-love.* It is every man's duty to love himself, and seek his own good. God commands men to prosecute their *own good,* in a way of subordination to his glory. God allows no man to ruin himself, but requires them to seek their own welfare all their days, Mat. vi. 20. And indeed, whatever sin a man commits, he acts contrary to the rule of self-love; all sin is hurtful, & not beneficial, to men; but, in a peculiar manner, they act contrary to this rule in *rejecting of Christ;* for therein they refuse a *tender of blessedness.* God, in the gospel, is offering salvation unto them; if they will but accept of Christ, they shall immediately be made heirs of blessedness; so that, in refusing Christ, they reject, at once, *all* the *glory of heaven,* and the *great fruits* of Christ's purchase, that they might injoy here in this world. They are *enemies to themselves;* put away salvation from themselves. You act, in this thing, like a deadly enemy to your own soul. If a man that were poisoned should refuse an antidote; if he that was condemned should refuse a pardon, would they not be therein enemies to themselves? so are you in refusing Christ; Prov. viii. 36. "All they that hate me, love death."

6. You *hereby hinder yourselves from doing any thing that is good;* from doing any thing in obedience to God. By neglecting of Christ, you keep youselves in a way of disobedience; the rejecting of *Christ,* is the reason why you live an unspiritual life. Your neglecting to come to Christ, makes you neglect *every other spiritual duty.* You may perform, indeed, many external duties, and attain unto inward affections; but you will never do any duty in a spiritual and acceptable manner, until you come to

Christ.

Christ. Faith in Christ, is the *first act* of obedience that any sinner does perform. That man that does not believe, does not love God; mourn for sin aright, nor seek the glory of God. It "is faith that purifies the heart," Acts xv. 9. It is by faith that a man first gives up himself to be God's servant; so that, by neglecting to believe, you bring yourselves under necessity of neglecting every other spiritual duty. This is the reason that, whatever you do in religion, is done in hypocrisy.

2. You may see the greatness of this sin, in not coming to Christ, from *the fountain* from whence it does proceed. In *secure* sinners, it flows nextly from a *contempt* of salvation; their eyes are dazzled with the glory of the world; they are insensible of eternal things: thy regard not the end, and therefore it is no wonder that they do not regard the means; but, in *awakened* sinners, the neglect of coming to *Christ*, arises from these *two* things:

(1.) *Pride.* This way of salvation by Christ, does not suit their proud spirits. God has chosen such a way of life, as suits his glorifying his grace; but it does not suit with their haughty hearts. This way, wherein God carries away all the glory, does not please them; and hence it is, that they are striving, by all the ways they can devise, to find out some other method, wherein they may have salvation; they do not like it, to be so much beholden unto God, but would fain find something in themselves to glory in: Hence they have an opposition of spirit to coming unto Christ; John v. 40. "You will not come to me that you may have life." It is not merely from weakness, but from pride and sturdiness of spirit, that they do not come unto Christ.

(2.) From

(2.) From their *not believing the testimony* of God. He tells them plainly, that their is righteousness enough for them in Christ; that, if they will come, they shall be saved; but they do not lay weight upon the word of God. God's word does not remove their doubts; they are not satisfied in the preciousness of Christ's righteousness, nor in the riches of God's grace, nor in the stability of the covenant; they *do not believe the report* of the gospel, Isa. liii. 1. And hence they do not see their way clear; they are afraid to come to Christ; they imagine it will be presumption; they think it is a way to get a curse, and not a blessing.

2. The *next motive is, the certain ruin of all unbelievers.* There is nothing else, to be expected, if you continue to reject Jesus Christ; but to be destroyed forever; the *misery* that will overtake you, is *exceeding great.* It is not poverty, sickness, disgrace, temporal death: but somewhat *ten thousand* times worse than those: this is that, that the eternal state of your souls turns upon; if you come not unto Christ, you will fall short of everlasting blessedness, and must take up your abode among devils. You are now under a possibility of enjoying the presence of God, and dwelling in the highest heavens, in unspeakable joy and happiness; but it is all lost and gone forever, if you give not entertainment to the invitations of the gospel; and, after you have spent a few days in vanity, you must *lie down in sorrow,* and have your portion in the lowest hell. Death will deliver you into the hands of tormentors, and you shall have darkness without light, pain without ease, and sorrow without joy. It had been better for you, if you had never been born;

the

the wrath of God will ly like a talent of lead upon your soul. You will have no friends to comfort you; no worldly enjoyments to refresh you: no hopes to support you; but set yourself to bear what you cannot bear, and to endure that which is intolerable. It may make ones flesh to tremble, to think what miseries some in this world have endured, from cruel enemies, and bloody *persecutors;* but those miseries were but for a little time, and fell nextly upon the body; and they are not to be compared with those miseries that are reversed for unbelievers in another world. Will it not be a dreadful thing to be separated from the joys of heaven, and that glorious society that is there? Will it not be dreadful to dwell with the *devil and his angels?* Will it not be dreadful to be left to the terror of a guilty conscience, the beginnings whereof here have made many men choose death rather than life? will it not be dreadful to be filled brim-full with the fiery wrath of God? to have every limb of thy body, and faculty of thy soul, as full as it can hold of the indignation of the Almighty? How loath will you be when it comes to, to enter into this condition? Men would shrink into nothing, if it were possible; *terrors will take hold upon them as waters;* they would fain escape out of the hands of revenging justice. How will you draw back, when you see yourselves upon the borders of destruction? Men would be glad that the *rocks would fall upon them,* and the hills cover them, so they might but escape. What will you think of it, when the devil shall lay hold of you, to drag you down to hell? How will you cry out, when tumbling into the lake that burns with fire and brimstone? What can comfort you in that condition? Men take great delight here in their worldly enjoyments

and pleasures ; but what comfort will it be to have had good things, when they are *tormented in this flame* ? Men comfort themselves here, that they have laid a foundation of worldly greatness for their children ; but what comfort will it be to them, to think that their children are eating and drinking, and sporting, when they are drinking the dregs of the wrath of God ? and whatever honour their sons come to, " their flesh upon them shall have pain, and their soul within them shall mourn." You have much to do now to bear any little affliction, and how do you think to go through these calamities, where nothing will be moderate, where all evils shall fall upon you, and that in the extremity of them ? You will wring your hands, and tear your hair, and gnash your teeth, and curse your day, and fill hell with outcries and lamentations ! This will be your portion, if you continue to reject Jesus Christ ; Luke xii. 46. " He shall appoint him his portion with unbelievers." It is not a matter of probability, a thing only to be much suspected, but beyond all question, that *you*, even *you*, are a *damned* man, if you do not entertain the calls of the gospel. You are spending away your time in delays ; but you had need resolve the case ; if you refuse Christ, you choose misery, you choose death, you choose eternal damnation : stand out from Christ a little longer, you are a gone man ! Men hope God will not be so hard to them as to damn them, especially considering the services they have done, and the pains they have taken in religion ; but there is one law for all men under the gospel. " He that believeth not shall be damned," Mat. xvi. 16. The unbeliever lies open to damnation on a double account ; upon the account of his *other sins*, and

upon

upon the account of his *unbelief*; Heb. ii. 3. "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" Let mens other qualifications be what they will, yet, if "they believe not, the wrath of God abideth upon them," John iii. 36. God threatens them in his word with ruin; and those threatenings are absolute, such as bind him in faithfulness to damn every unbeliever. There are many indefinite threatenings in the Scripture, and many conditional; but these are absolute ones, against every one that continues in unbelief; there is no possibility for them to escape.

This appears,

1. *Because it is contrary to the decree and appointment of God to save such as do not believe.* The decrees of God are inviolable; it is a vain thing for any man to look for salvation, contrary to God's decree. But it is against God's decree to save unbelievers; not that there is such a formal act in the decree, that unbelievers shall be damned; but this is a truth arising from the decree; for God has determined to give faith unto all those that he has chosen unto salvation; he has determined to lead them in a way of faith unto life; 2 Thess. ii. 13. "God has chosen you from the beginning unto salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth." All that God has chosen unto life, shall believe: John vi. 37. "All that the Father has given me, shall come unto me." So that it is cross to the decree of God, to save any man that has not faith; the decree of God is a bar in the way of his salvation.

2. Because *faith is the condition* of the covenant of grace

grace. There is one law for all men ; there is but one condition of this covenant ; John v. 24. " He that heareth my words, and believeth in him that sent me, hath everlasting life," &c. We are directed to take this way for salvation. There is no other way proposed, in case of a failure in this ; so that the want of this, must needs exclude men from the good of the covenant ; the want of this condition renders men incapable of life.

3. Because it *must be so in justice ;* and God's heart is as much upon the glorifying of his justice, as his grace. One attribute is as due to him as another ; the glorifying of his justice is not a by-business, but a thing that his heart is deeply concerned in ; and justice requires the ruin of unbelievers ; for they deserve it ; Rom. vi. 23. " The wages of sin is death." And there is no *way* for justice to be satisfied for their sins, but *by* their ruin.

4. Because *it is foretold and prophesied of,* that *Christ will destroy unbelievers,* when he comes to judgment. The Scripture gives us an account beforehand, of the transactions of the day of judgment ; what will be the issue of things, and befall these and those in that day ; and God tells us, that unbelievers shall be ruined then. He does not only threaten them with ruin, but tells the saints that such persons shall be ruined ; 2 Thess. i. 7, 8. " He will take vengeance on them that obey not the gospel of Jesus Christ." Rev. xxi. 8. " The fearful and unbelieving shall have their part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone."

5. Because the *sentence of God in the gospel, is that which*

*which men shall be judged by.* God declares, in the gospel, " that he that believeth not, shall be damned." And And if unbelievers be tried by this rule, they will certainly perish : if God should try them by some other rule, they might fancy or imagine they might make a shift to escape ; but, by this rule, they are gone men ; and this is the rule they must be tried by. God will have no respect in that day unto mens riches, or learning, or esteem among men, or their civil or moral conversation ; but their case must be determined by the gospel ; Rom. ii. 16. " God will judge the secrets of men, by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel."

6. Those that do not believe in Christ, *have not those other qualifications that do accompany salvation.* There be many other qualifications, besides faith, that God has promised salvation unto ; and some men that are under a conviction, that they have not faith, are pretenders to some of those qualifications ; but they do but flatter themselves : when *they* come to be examined by God, *they* will be found destitute of all those *holy* qualifications. *They* make a shew of humility, patience, love to God, regard to his *glory* ; but those shews are but delusions ; all the religion of those men that have not faith, is hypocrisy. There *may* be *morality* without faith, and strong religious affections ; but there is no sanctification where there is no faith : there *may* be the shadow of it, but not the thing itself ; Acts xxvi. 18. " Sanctified by faith that is in me."

It is *impossible* for you to *escape ruin,* if you do not believe ; and that is not all ; for your rejecting of Christ does

does not only expose you unto condemnation, but to a *greater degree* of misery, than multitudes will endure that go to hell. You may not think to escape as *Heathens* will do; your load will be heavier, and your fire will be hotter, and your judgment every way sorer than the judgment of other men. God will proportion every man's misery to his iniquity. And, as you have enjoyed greater light and love, so you must expect more amazing and exquisite wrath than other men; *conscience* has more to accuse you of, and condemn you for, and so has *God*. And you will sink down deeper into hell than other men. You are treasuring up a greater measure of wrath than others, against the day of wrath. You have blessed God, it may be, many times for the means of grace that he has bestowed upon you; but you will curse yourselves a thousand times more for not improving them; you will wish that you had lived in the darkest corners of the earth, among *Scythians* and *Barbarians*. It will be a terror to you to think of your *baptism*, what *books* you have read, what *Ministers* you have heard, what *counsels* have been given to you; every sinner will be in a dreadful condition then; but it will be *more tolerable for many*, than for you, Mat. xi. 22, 24.

3. The *third motive* is, that *you shall be accepted and saved, if you will believe.* Life and death are set before you, though you have been a grievous sinner; though you have hardened your heart against God a long while; though you have rejected counsels, and despised reproofs, and spent your days hitherto in sin, and travelled a great way in the path that leads to death; yet there is no necessity of your damnation, you are capable of salvation

still

still. If you will cast away yourself, by continuing in unbelief, you must bear it yourselves; others that labored after your salvation, will do well enough, the loss will be your own. But there is no need of your being ruined; there is yet an open door, and liberty set before you, to enter into the most holy place; if you will but accept of Christ, you shall have salvation. You are crying out, "What must I do to be saved?" You are not so solicitous for worldly enjoyments, but your care is to go to heaven; and there is reason for it. It is a glorious thing to *see the face of God;* to be spectators of his glory: the glimpses of it here, are more refreshing than all the sweetnesses of the world. To see God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and all the *attributes* of God, is most delightful. If you go to heaven, there you will have an uninterrupted sight of God; you shall see him as he is, and no clouds shall ever darken the light of his countenance: then you shall have the abiding sense of his love: never make any question about it more, but be delighting therein forever. Then you shall be delivered from sin, and made glorious, after the image of God. Then you shall be *with Jesus Christ.* It is a comfort to hear of him; but then you shall be in his presence: you have a fame of him now, but then you shall *see him;* your eyes shall behold your redeemer; him that is wonderful in his person, God and man, and wonderful in the glory that he has advanced unto: you shall have *external* manifestations of his favor; you shall hear his wisdom, and see his glorious managements and behavior of himself, and have opportunity to express your thankfulness unto the face of Christ. Then you shall have the *gifts of the Spirit* in a glorious manner. The *company* of holy *angels* that have been

been helpful to you ; and the *spirits of just men* that you have heard and read of in the book of God ; *Adam* and *Noah*, and *Abraham, Moses, David, Paul*, &c. There your employment will be glorious, and your *body* will be glorious, if you will but come to Christ ; besides a great deal of mercy that God will bestow upon you in this world, you shall partake of eternal salvation : as poor a sinful creature as thou art, the Lord is offering eternal life to thee, if thou wilt but accept it as a free gift from him, through Jesus Christ, you shall be welcome to it. Though heavenly glory be so great, and you be so unworthy, God will bestow it upon you. Do you desire eternal life ? are you indeed set for happiness in another world ? If you are, you may soon secure it, and make it sure to you if you will : Entertain these calls of the gospel, and you shall be saved. The Lord has given abundant assurance ; this is no pleasing dream, but a thing certain and infallible.

This appears, if you consider,

1. *Because God has been at a great deal of cost, in order to the salvation of believers.* If a man should eagage so far in any undertaking, as to spend a vast estate in it, we should readily conclude, that it lay indeed upon his heart, that he was real in it, and that his spirit was deeply engaged : And thus it is in this case ; God has been at great expense ; he has laid out himself more for the salvation of believers, than he did for the *making of the world.* He has exercised much of his wisdom on this design, much power ; yea, he gave his only begotten Son, "that whoever believeth on him, might not perish, but

have

have everlasting life," John iii. 16. Must not his heart be much in it, when he gave his *Son* to die? Could any thing have induced God to such a strange dispensation, had not the salvation of believers been a thing that his heart was resolved upon? God has by this given conviction to the world, that he is set to save believers. When we consider how many wonders God wrought in order to it; how he sent his son from heaven, constituted him a Mediator, delivered him over unto death; it may give us great satisfaction, that God is really bent to save them. Why should he go so far, if he did not intend to go through? God that has spent so much for the salvation of believers will spend a little more to carry the work on to perfection. God loves his Son too much, to let him die in vain; to put him to such sorrows, and then to let the design of all his sufferings fall to the ground.

2. *God has promised Jesus Christ to save those that believe on him.* Christ Jesus did not die at uncertainties; the Father had engaged to him the salvation of believers. God *covenanted* with him, that multitudes should be saved by him, and that in a way of believing; Isa. liii. 11. "By his knowledge, shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities." And Jesus Christ, in expectation of that, has laid down his life, and is waiting for the accomplishment of the promise. Christ has taken God's word, and has paid the price of their salvation; and God will not fail of his promise. This *eternal transaction* between the Father and the Son, puts the salvation of believers beyond all question. God stands engaged to Christ, and Christ is set in his spirit to have this engagement fulfilled unto every believer. Christ is

not willing to lose one believer, but claims the promise, and is set for their salvation; John xvii. 20. "I pray for them also that shall believe on me through their word." And what does he desire for them? among other things, "that they may be where he is, to behold his glory," ver. 24.

3. *The Lord is persuading of you to believe in Christ.* He is urging of you, and stirring of you up. This is the very design of the gospel, to gain men's consent to come to Christ. He invites you to come, Rev. xxii. 17. and is giving you an account what preparation he has made for your acceptance. He has appointed the *ordinance of the ministry* upon this design, to draw you to Christ, and make up the match between you and Christ, 2 Cor. v. 20. Yea, upon this account, he *sends his spirit* into your hearts, to terrify you, to mind you of your dying day, of eternal judgment, of the sinfulness of your lives and hearts, that you may be compelled to come away to Christ; that you may not be able to rest without him. And why should God concern himself so to persuade you to believe, if this were not a way of salvation? What design can God have upon his heart in these works of his, but to save you, if you will hearken unto his voice? Why does God take so much pains about this, if the life of your souls did not depend upon it? Would God strive so to bring you to Christ, if you would not be the better for coming unto him? Certainly God lays extraordinary weight upon it, and is deeply engaged in it, to bring you unto Christ? and would he be so, if it were not a way of life and blessedness? God would let men alone, and never busy himself so to persuade them to believe in

Christ,

Christ, if the life of their souls did not depend upon it? It would not be worth the while, for God, with a great deal of care, and by many *wonderful works* of his Spirit, to bring men to believe, if this were not the way of salvation. It would not become the *wisdom* and *goodness* of God, to labour in this manner to persuade men to believe, if this were not the way of life.

4. *God promises salvation to you, if you will believe.* God is not at liberty to accept or reject you; but he has brought himself under bonds, and entered into a solemn covenant to save you, if you come to Christ. He has made a firm engagement, without any exceptions, conditions, reservations, to bestow salvation upon you. That he might put the thing without doubt, he has *given you his word*, that he will save you. You conclude, that if you continue in this condition, wherein you are, you shall be damned, because God *threatens* you so: and may you not with as good ground conclude, that, if you believe you shall be saved, because God hath *promised* you so? He has not only promised eternal life to those that are already believers, but he has promised it unto you, upon condition that you will believe; Acts x. 43. "Whoever believeth on him, shall receive remission of sins." God has given you the assurance of his word; his actions do speak this to be his design; but by his word he has engaged his faithfulness to you. The *holiness* and *fidelity* of God, and the care he has for his own honour, stand security for your salvation, if you come to Christ. In this promise, you may see the condescending grace of God, how willing he is to satisfy you; and the firm

ground

ground you have to go upon, in coming to Christ for salvation ; you have the word of God to bear you out.

5. *God has many ways confirmed and strengthened his promise.* Not but that his bare word is security enough, but because men have distrustful hearts, and are full of surmises and jealousies ; he has given abundant security to us of the *stability* of his promise, he has given it under his hand ; we have his word to shew for it ; he has made a firm *indenture,* subscribed and recorded it. He has not only spoken it by word of mouth, but has made a firm deed, and *published it under his hand ;* and millions of men can witness to it, that he has bound himself to save those that come to Christ ; 1 John v. 11. "This is the record, that God hath given us eternal life ; and this life is in his Son." He has also established his promise by *sealing* to it. Circumcision was the seal of the righteousness of faith, Rom. iv. 11. Men seal indentures, to shew the reality of their purpose, and to make their promise legally more firm : So God has, by the *sacraments* in the *Old Testament,* and by *baptism,* and the *Lord's Supper* in the *New Testament,* sealed to the *covenant ;* and ratified the same by holy ordinances, that would be prophaned, if the covenant should fail. God has also *sworn* to the covenant of grace. It had been unreasonble for us to have desired such a *confirmation* from God ; but God voluntarily condescended to is, to gain our belief, Heb. vi. 17. 18. that we *might have strong consolation.* The oath of God does declare the promise to be irrevocable, and that God will not repent ; Psal. cx. 4. "The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent." God has given you *all*

*manner*

*manner of encouragement,* that you may evidently see an impossibility of failing of salvation, if you come to Christ.

6. *God has made Jesus Christ the Judge of the world.* He has appointed him to take the examination of men, and to give sentence upon them. He has promised Christ, that believers shall be saved; and he has put power into the hands of Christ, to see the thing accomplished, and leaves the managing of the great day of judgment to him; Acts xvii. 31. "He will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained." And certainly Jesus Christ will not suffer any to perish that come to him. Christ has died for the salvation of believers; and how can it be imagined but he will adjudge them unto life? Christ's righteousness cannot but be a good plea in the day of judgment, where Christ is the Judge. Those that have an interest in the righteousness of Christ, shall pass without exception in that day. He will be as ready to acquit them in the day of judgment, as he was before to die for them. Christ Jesus has a deep sense of the virtue and worthiness of his death and obedience, and will be ready to accept of you on that account, Heb. ix. 28.

2. I shall add some *considerations,* further, to *enforce* these motives.

1. *Many others do venture their souls on Christ.* The persuasions of the gospel have prevailed upon many. There be *thousands* of men and women that have relinquished all other hopes, and have built upon this foundation; many others have hearkened unto God; and it is a shame to you to be more backward unto duty than others.

There are a *cloud of witnesses* that have gone before you in other ages, and many, at this day, that betake themselves unto Christ for refuge. Others that have been trying all conclusions and turning every stone, have at last seen a necessity to come unto Christ. Others have been satisfied with the encouragements that God has given, and have taken sanctuary in Christ. *Men of judgment and prudence,* not subject to be led by fancies and delusions more than other men, have let go all carnal confidences, and fled to this hope set before them : and this they have done, not once or twice in an hurry of temptation, but they live in this way ; " I live by faith in the Son of God," Gal. ii. 20. Their coming unto Christ is *no rash inconsiderate act ;* but, after they have had the consideration of it many years, have weighed it, and pondered it, looked on all sides, and considered all that can be said, they do not see cause to repent, but continue to believe ; it is no unadvised act, they *understand* what they do, 2 Tim. i. 12. ; and the longer they live they are more established in a way of believing. God's dispensations towards them, since their coming unto Christ, are not such as do discourage them, but they are more encouraged still to commit themselves unto Christ. Why do not you come also unto Christ ? Methinks you should be ashamed to be listening unto carnal reasoning, and giving way to the pride of your hearts, when others have overcome them ; methinks it should stir up a spirit of fear, to see others getting into the way of salvation, and you left behind, to be a prey to *devils !* Think what your sins have been ; what inward workings have been in your heart ; and you must say you have as *much need* of Christ as other men. Think what the call of God is,

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how free and full the invitation is; and you must say you have as *much encouragement* to come to Christ, as other men: and others that love their souls, as well as you do yours, have ventured them in the hands of Jesus Christ; and do you not think that it will be hard for you to see others stand at the right hand of Christ another day, and yourselves rejected?

2. *You must never expect inward peace and quietness, unless you come unto Christ.* You complain now, in the bitterness of your souls, what a sorrowful life you lead; you find little comfort in any thing; you are so terrified with a guilty conscience, that it eats out the comfort of your life. "A dreadful sound is in his ears," Job xv. 21. You are under such apprehensions of the anger of God, that you know not how to bear it. When you hear or read the threatenings of judgment, you are terrified that that will be your portion; when you see instances of judgment, you are afraid that God will do so with you; leave you to such and such sins; bring such and such calamities upon you: your heart is meditating terror, affrighted with the thoughts of damnation. Sermons terrify you, providences terrify you, your heart is always loaded; the way to have *inward peace* and quietness, is to come to Jesus Christ; Rom. v. 1. "Being jsutified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." But until you come to Christ, you must never expect to be better. You may have a pleasing dream, it may be, for a while, and your wound may be skinned over; but you must not expect to have any true peace, so long as you stand at a distance from Chsist. What peace can men expect, while their sins

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are not pardoned? What peace can men enjoy, as long as God is angry? You must expect no other but to spend your *days in vanity, and your years in trouble,* if you give not entertainment unto Christ. "Through fear of death they were all their lifetime subject unto bondage," Heb. ii. 15. The venom of sin will be burning in your bowels, until you look unto the *brazen serpent.* And what madness is it for men needlessly to live a *tormented life?* Are you not weary of this condition? Have you a mind to live in *sorrow* longer? Do not you care to be delivered from your fears? Thou wilt never have peace without coming unto Chrirt. You have tried a great while in vain, and it will be in vain still; but, if you will give entertainment unto him, his blood will heal your conscience, scatter fears, and refresh your hearts. "The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law; but thanks be to God that giveth the victory, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

3. *If you do not come to Christ, you will lose all the pains that you have taken in religion.* You had need be careful, that you lose not the things that you have wrought. The labour that you have taken in religion is all lost with respect unto some expectations of yours therefrom; as, to the mortifying of sin thereby, the getting of the good will of God, the purchasing of pardon, &c. And if you do come to Christ, you must see it to *be lost* in this respect; Phil. iii. 7. "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ." But yet in some respect, the pains you have taken, may be of advantage unto you, inasmuch as you are nearer to salvation than before you began to seek after God. You

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have been travelling in the way towards heaven. Some men are nearer the kingdom of God a great deal than others, Mat. xii. 34. "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God." You have been taking a great deal of pains, have withstood temptations, have got much knowledge, have broken off your sinful practices, come to understand somewhat of the plague of your own hearts: you have got over many bars that lay in the way of your salvation; you have escaped many rocks, upon which some souls have split in pieces: are in a fairer way to get to heaven than you were some time since; and it would be sad to perish upon the borders of *Canaan*, after sore travel in the wilderness; to sink at the mouth of the harbour, after you have rode out many storms; to lose all your care and labour and sorrows, after all to go down to hell, among those that never took any pains for salvations; and this you will certainly do, if you do not come to Christ. Though you are past the strait gate of *reformation*, yet if you do not enter and go through the gate of *humiliation* and *faith*, if you do not cast away your carnal confidences, you will not enter into life. When the *Galatians* were carried away with opinions of their own righteousness, *Paul* says to them, "Have you suffered so many things in vain if it be yet in vain?" Gal. iii. 4. All your *labour will be in vain*, and your souls will be *lost*, if you come not to Christ.

4. *You will exceedingly bewail it hereafter, if you do not accept of Christ.* You will rue it in another world. You stand upon frivolous objections, and neglect to come unto Christ. But this will cost you many a tear; you are preparing sorrow for yourselves. Your hearts will

break

break hereafter, to think what you have done; when you see how you have ruined yourselves, you will take up a bitter lamentation. It will make your heart break, to think that there was but a step between you and life, and yet you missed it: that you have thrown away your souls, and needlessly damned yourselves: that you were under fair opportunities, and brought to the very gate of heaven, and yet would not go in. When you see others that lived in the same *town*, or dwelt under the same *roof* with yourselves, in glory; how bitter will it be to think that you have heard the *same sermons*, enjoyed the same advantages, but, by unbelief, have deprived yourselves of what they do enjoy? When you think of it, how you took it into consideration, and were advising about it, had many thoughts about coming unto Christ; how bitter will it be to you to think, that you did not go through with it, that you minded it by halves, and did not make up the match with Christ; When you think how plain the way is, how fair the terms, what assurance God gave you; it will be like the *gall of asps* within you, to remember how you cavilled, what excuses you made, what frivolous things you stood upon, what objections you turned off the calls of the gospel by. The reflections upon your unbelief, will be bitter reflections another day! When you see the end of it, what it brings you to, what it costs, you will grievously lament it; and say, as Prov. v. 12. 13. "How have I hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof? I have not obeyed the voice of my teachers, nor inclined mine ear to them that instructed me."

5. *Others will rejoice in it, if you come to Christ.*

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Your unbelief is a grief of heart to many that seek your good. *Paul* had *great heaviness and continual sorrow in his heart* upon this account, respecting his *countrymen;* Rom. ix. 2. and *Jesus Christ wept over Jerusalem,* because she knew not the things of her peace. And it is one of the great *burdens* of the *people of God,* that so many among whom they live, do reject the calls of the gospel. But if you would give entertainment to it, it would be a *matter of joy* to many a one. You would be glad yourself; you would have peace and joy in believing; and others would be glad with you: for it is a token of the presence of God, and a means of your salvation, a means to strengthen and continue the kingdom of God. Your *godly relations* would rejoice, Prov. xxiii. 15. "My son, if thy heart be wise, my heart shall rejoice, even mine." It will be a more joyful day to them, than the day of your birth. And *ministers* that have *travailed in pain for you,* will *rejoice* when *Christ is formed in you.* Yea, *Jesus Christ* rejoices greatly, when a sinner is brought home to him; it is the *day of espousals,* and therefore the day of the *gladness of his hsart.* When he sees souls brought home to him, when he sees the fruit of his sorrows, the *travail of his soul,* he is *satisfied;* in this day of victory Christ triumphs. Heaven and earth will rejoice at it, if you will entertain the calls of the gospel, Luke xv. 10. "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." *God* himself takes delight in it; there will be repining in hell, but joy in heaven, if you come to Christ.

6. *It is from the practice of Satan, that you are so backward to come.* Not but that there is an enmity in your

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own hearts to the entertaining of Jesus Christ, but the opposition of your heart is much strengthened by the counsels of the *Devil;* the Devil, out of enmity to God, and Jesus Christ, and mankind, is labouring to hinder the efficacy of the gospel; he is heightening those corrupt principles that are in men, and dissuading of them from entertaining of the gospel. Satan has abundance of devices to hinder the reception of the gospel. Men are ready to think that they do act their own judgment in standing off from Christ, and are not aware of the activity of Satan in it; he suggests his reasonings, as if they were the motions of men's own hearts; but their opposition to the gospel does arise from him, 2 Cor. iv. 4. "The God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." The Devil is blinding them by *false reasonings*, by instilling discouragements and presumptuous conclusions: and will you offer to go abreast against the counsel of God, and take the Devil's counsel? What can men expect to find but *deceit* in following his suggestions? Men have little cause to lay weight on those carnal reasonings that rise up in them, considering from whence they come. Will God give you counsel for your hurt? Will *Satan* give you counsel for your *good?* Whither will that path lead you, that Satan does direct you to? Is it safe to follow his counsels? Dare you venture your souls in a way that he prescribes? What is to be expected from him that is en enemy to God and you, but that he will dishonor God, ruin you, if it be possible? Hearken not any longer to him; but take his advice, upon whose wisdon,

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love and faithfulness you may rest, Rev. iii. 18. "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich, and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed."

3. I shall *answer* such *objections* as awakened sinners are wont to make.

Object 1. *If ministers did know how bad I were, they would not encourage me to come unto Christ. They are charitable men and do not imagine how bad I am; what sins I have committed, what neglects I have lived in, what desperate risings have been in my heart; if they did they would not invite me to come to Christ.*

*Ans.* 1. Ministers *do know what is in your heart;* though they do not know what actual transgressions in particular you have been guilty of; how your corrupt inclinations have wrought: yet they do know what *sinful inclinations* are in your heart, and a great deal better than you do yourselves. They understand the state of man by nature, and how the heart is wont to work under diverse dispensations. You do not see so much of your own badness as they can tell you of; yet that does not discourage them.

2. *How badsoever you are, or have been, they have a sufficient warrant for encouraging of you to believe.* They are not concerned to inquire *how bad* men have been; unless they know you to be guilty of the *unpardonable sin,* they have ground to encourage you to come to Christ. If you were worse than you are, you are included in the call of the gospel. Jesus Christ himself preached the gospel in great assemblies, and offered salvation to any

that would accept of it, Mat. iv. 23. And he has commanded his ministers to preach it unto you, Mark xvi. 15. "Go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature;" that is, every human creature. Ministers have as good a warrant to preach it to them that are, or have been profane, as to those that have lived a civil life; to those that have had more violent workings of corruptions, as to those that have been more restrained. The promise of the gospel is *universal*, it is not limited to such or such sinners, but it comprehends you as well as others, John iii. 16. If the minister did know all the sins that you have been guilty of from your childhood to this day, he could not with a good conscience neglect to offer salvation unto you.

Object. 2. *I am so bad, that I fear God cannot be willing to shew mercy unto me; it seems that God must needs loath me, and his heart is turned away from me.*

*Ans.* Such reasonings are but the *conjectures* of mens hearts, who are ignorant of God. There is no foundation in the word of God for such thoughts; they are but the imaginations of men who know not God. God can find in his heart to shew mercy to whom he pleaseth. He could shew mercy to devils, if he would. There is nothing in him to restrain the exercise of grace but his own pleasure. For,

1. *There is nothing in God to compel him to destroy the sinner.* What should force God to damn you? If you be never so bad, yet God is not necessitated to reject you. His *holiness* does not compel him: the *holiness* of God is no impediment to the exercising of pardoning grace.

grace. There is a scripture that looks that way, Joshua xxiv. 19. "Ye cannot serve the Lord, for he is an holy God; he is a jealous God, he will not forgive your transgressions, nor your sins." But the meaning of it is, that they were such a perverse people that they could not serve God so, but that they would bring his judgments on them; for he is so holy as that he will punish his visible people while they go on in ways of degeneracy. But his *holiness* and his *grace* do not thwart one another; for it is no prejudice to the interest of holiness, that God pardons great sinners; for when God pardons, he sanctifies too; 1 Cor. vi. 11. Neither is the *justice* of God any hinderance to the exercise of pardoning mercy. Justice forbids pardon without satisfaction made, but not if there be *satisfaction*; if the law, which is the rule of justice, be attended to, there is nothing contrary to the justice of God. The law makes no distinction between great and little sinners; great ones are capable of pardon as well as others, if there be satisfaction. The law admits of the pardon of no sin without satisfaction, but it admits of the pardon of any sin, if there be satisfaction. Neither does *God's care of his glory* hinder him from pardoning of great sinners, for he can turn that to the advantage of his glory. The pardoning of such is greatly subservient unto that design, Eph. i. 7.

2. There is *mercy enough in God* for the pardoning of your *sins*, be they *never so great*. God's nature is of infinite and unlimited perfection: there is an infinite ocean of grace in the heart of God. It is not possible for man to commit such sins that God should not be able to pardon them. God is of such mercy, that he can do

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any thing that is an act of mercy. As there is nothing too hard for the *power* of God, so there is nothing too hard for the *mercy* of God. And certainly sinners have little reason to object that God cannot find in his heart to pardon them, when he has found in his heart to provide a sufficient sacrifice for them ; when he has found in his heart to offer them pardon ; when he has found in his heart to pardon others, as great sinners as they.

Object. 3. *God is exceeding angry with me ; he is in his providences testifying against me ; and fills me with terrors ; and though I cry to him, he does not regard my cries, therefore I am afraid to believe.*

*Ans.* 1. *The great thing that God is angry with you for, is your unbelief.* The despising of the gospel, is the great provoking sin ; that was it that greatly provoked God against the *Jews*, Rom. xi. 20. "They were broken off by unbelief." And this should put you upon it to make hast to Christ, that you may not provoke him more to anger against you : the longer you live in unbelief, the more angry God will be.

2. *Anger in God is not a passion as it is in men.* God is not capable of being angry after that manner that men are angry. Men are so angry sometimes, that they cannot forget an injury ; they are quite overruled with this passion ; passion masters them, they are in servitude to it. But God is not passionate, he is never transported with anger ; anger is but figuratively applied unto God ; it notes his will to punish and chasten men for their sins ; but in men, it is a violent affection, that many times they cannot restrain. 3. *When*

3. *When God is very angry, yet it is safe venturing upon Christ.* If you *come to Christ*, God will not reject you, though he be very angry. This is the way proposed by himself for the removing of his anger. Though he be angry, yet he is ready to pardon in a way of believing: He is never so angry as to reject those that come unto Christ. When grievously provoked, yet he has a pardon in his hand to bestow upon all that will accept of it. There is encouragement enough in the gospel to make you with joy to rely upon a provoked God. He assures you, in this way you shall be forgiven: though he be angry, yet he will not forget his promises that he has made unto returning sinners, Jer. iii. 22.

Object. 4. *God threatens such as I am, peremptorily with ruin*; Prov. xxix. 1. He that being often reproved, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy. *And therefore I am afraid God will not accept me.*

*Ans.* Such threatenings as this are only *declarations* of what God does *oftentimes* do. There are some threatenings that are *absolute*; wherein God does absolutely declare what he will do; such are the threatenings of *ruin* for *final impenitency and unbelief.* But many other threatenings are but declarations of what God oftentimes does, and, in their application to particular persons, are to be understood *with a condition*; according to that rule, Jer, xviii. 7, 8. So that such persons may be saved, if they do repent. This is evident, not only from the many invitations in the Scripture, that reach and

comprehend such sinners as well as others ; but from hence also, that the generality of those whom the Lord accepts, have been guilty of rejecting many reproofs ; the generality of the saints have lived to mens and womens estates, under means, before they yielded any real obedience unto god : therefore this threatening cannot be understood of the certain ruin of all that have hardened their necks after many reproofs. If you be of this number, there is free liberty and good encouragement for you to come to Christ notwithstanding.

Object. 5. *But I am afraid that God has given me up to* judicial hardness *of heart, that he has* taken his Spirit away *from me ; and if so , he does not intend me in the call of the gospel.*

*Ans.* 1. There is *an hardness of heart that is not judicial.* Indeed, every man by nature is under the power of an hard heart. There may be abundance of hard-heartedness in you, though no judicial hardness. There may be some *legal* softness, and tenderness, and *relenting,* where there is judicial hardness, as it was with *Pharaoh.* So there may be hardness where there is no judicial hardness. This is an evidence of it, because God promises them to take away the hardness of their hearts ; Ezek. xi. 19. " I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh."

2. Many *others have feared* that they have been judicially hardened, *that have afterwards been converted.* They that are judicially hardened, do not use to be perplexed with this fear. The judgment itself is wont to

deliver

deliver them from fears of this kind ; but it is a frequent thing for souls under trouble to be afraid of this : others have seen afterwards that they have been mistaken, and so may you.

3. The reasons why persons under the work of conversion, fear that they are given up to hardness, and that the Spirit of God has forsaken them, is, *because the Spirit does after a while change its way of working.* When the Spirit begins to work upon them, his manner is to discover their danger, and after a while to give them some encouragement, whereby they come to have strong affections, sorrow, desire, delight ; and now they are easily persuaded that the Spirit is at work with them, and do not look upon themselves hardened ; but after a while, when these affections fail them, and they find themselves *dull and senseless*, now they are afraid that the Spirit has left them. Whereas the reason is, the Spirit has changed his work, and is about to shew them what hearts they have, in order to the work of *humiliation.* If men could maintain their lively affections, they would never come to Christ ; therefore the Spirit of God does leave them unto, and lead them into an *experimental knowledge* of the hardness of their hearts. So that this is no sign of the Spirit's leaving you, but an effect of the presence of the Spirit. His manner is to convince men that they are *poor and wretched, and blind and miserable, Rev.* iii. 17.

4. *The conditional offer of the gospel is made to you, how hard soever your heart is.* You are called, and if you will accept, you shall be saved. God rejects none that come to him by Christ. Do you accept the gospel,

and

and God will never object your hard-heartedness against you. He never turned any away, because their hearts were hard: Come to him and he will give you pardon, and a soft heart too.

Object. 6. *I am afraid I have committed that sin for which there is no sacrifice. It is said,* if we sin wilfully, after we have received the knowledg of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin; Heb. x. 26. *And I am afraid it is so with me, for I have had great enlightenings; and since I have been enlightened, I have been guilty of a great deal of rebellion aginst God, and have felt the workings of enmity to God in my heart; and if so, it is a vain thing for me to come to Christ; he was not sacrificed for such.*

*Ans.* For the answering of this doubt, I shall open this Scripture to you, and shew you what is meant by *sinning*, and by *wilful sinning*

1. By sinning here is *not meant any sort of sin*, but some *special sin*; particularly the sin of *apostasy*, and renouncing of the gospel. This is evident, because this sin is that which he speaks of in the *verse* immediately preceding: there he speaks of mens casting off their Christian society, and therewith the *profession* of the truth; which is the thing he dissuades from in this verse. And he evidently speaks of apostasy when he comes to explain his meaning more fully; ver. 29. he calls this sin *a treading under foot the Son of God*, &c. Besides, the same apostle speaking of the same sin, Heb. vi. 6. calls it a *falling away*.

2. By

2. By sinning or apostatizing *wilfully*, we are to understand a *malicious apostacy*. The word indeed does signify willingly : but it also signifies spitefully or maliciously, or, as in our version, *wilfully*. There are *three ways* that men may apostatize from the profession of the gospel. They may do it *ignorantly* : when men are blinded by the arguments of heretics. They may do it *against their light*, through a spirit of *fear*, as some good men have done, and many others that have not sinned unpardonably. In time of *persecution*, many have, through weakness, denied the gospel. They may do it *spitefully* and maliciously ; that is here intended ; for they are said, ver. 29. " to do despite to the spirit of grace." By this you may see, that though there have been many backslidings after your illumination, though you have had a stubborn and rebellious heart, yet you may be free from the sin here intended, and have opportunity to come with acceptance unto Christ.

Object. 7. *I have not the qualifications that are mentioned sometimes in the invitation of the gospel ; as* Isaiah lv. 1. " Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters." Mat. xi. 28. " Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." *Therefore, I fear I am not invited.*

Ans. 1. *Some persons have these qualifications, that fear they have not.* Some men think they are not athirst, because they do not find longing desire after Christ ; their hearts are dead and senseless ; they do not find any love unto Christ : But souls may be said to be *athirst*, when they are in want of refreshing ; when their souls are *parched* under the *sense of God's anger*, their hearts are ready

ready to fail for want of comfort. So they think they are not *heavy laden*, because sin is not such a burden to them as it should be; because they have not an heart to mourn for sin: but there is no man can mourn for sin aright, until he has closed with Christ. But you are heavy laden, if the anger of God, and your danger do load you; and you cannot find any means in yourselves to ease you of your burden, Acts xvi. 30. "What must I do to be saved?"

2. The invitation is *not confined* to men that have these qualifications, but *only particularly applied unto them.* Such are under special temptation, and have special need of support. It is one thing to *apply* the call to one particular sort of men, another to *limit* it, and confine it to them: it may be applied particularly to young ones, yet that does not exclude the ancient; to poor ones, yet that does not exclude the wealthy; to afflicted ones, and that does not exclude men that are in prosperity; unto the *Jews* but that does not exclude the *Gentiles*; Rev. xxii. 32, "Whoever will, let him come, and take of the water of life freely."

Object. 8. *I have not a work of* humiliation, *I am not brought wholly out of myself; therefore I am not called.*

*Ans.* 1. Persons that are *not humbled, are called to come to Christ.* Their next work indeed is not to come to Christ, but to come out of themselves, and so come to Christ; to *forsake all other confidences*, and build on Christ; to throw away other hopes, and flee to this hope that is set before them; to throw away their crutches and

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lean upon Christ. *Self-righteous* persons are invited, Rev. iii. 17, 18. They that *said* they were *rich*, are invited to come to Christ for *gold tried in the fire*.

2. If persons are *so far humbled as to be willing to take Christ on his own terms, that is enough.* There needs no humiliation before faith, but upon this account, that persons may be so shiftless, that they may be willing to take Christ as a *free gift* of God. Men need so much, that they may not make lies their refuge, but may be prepared to take the *free offer* of the gospel; so much as is necessary in order to a dependence on Christ and free grace is needful, and no more.

Object. 9. *How can the righteousness of Christ make God love me? I have no righteousness of my own to draw the heart of God to me, and I do not see how the righteousness of Christ can procure the love of God for me.*

*Ans.* 1. The use of the righteousness of Christ is *to answer the demands of the law for you.* The law laid an objection in the way of your salvaton, which must be removed before you could be saved; the law would not admit of your salvation, without a complete righteousness; and the righteousness of Christ does remove this objection. This is as much as the law does demand as the condition of life. The righteousness of Christ makes you an heir of blessedness according to the law. This removes the guilt of sin, this supplies your want of worthiness; so that hereby fair way is made for your salvation without any injustice; Rom. iii. 26. There needs nothing more to make your salvation free from any legal exceptions.

2. There

2. There is *no need* that the righteousness of Christ *should procure the love of God for you.* Men are troubling of themselves in vain, when they are seeking a cause of God's love out of himself. God's love is the *first cause* of man's salvation, and has no dependence upon any thing. It is impossible that any thing out of God should move God to love you, and there is *sufficiency of grace* in God to love you, though there be no external cause to move him. God loves men freely, Hos. xiv. 4. He can have mercy upon you, *because he will.* The love that God has to the angels of heaven is not built upon their righteousness, but is the foundation of their righteousness; because they were *elect* angels, therefore they continued holy angels. And the love of God to *Abraham* and all his saints does not depend upon their righteousness, nor upon the righteousness of Christ; indeed, the love of God was the reason why Christ was sent to work out righteousness for us; John iv. 10. "He loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

Object. 10. *I have not the* inward call *of the gospel; how can it be said then, that God calls me? I have indeed an* external *call, but God does not inwardly call me; and I wait for that.*

*Ans.* It is the *outward call* of the *gospel* that gives men their *warrant* to believe. It is the written word of God that bears us out in it; and you must not expect any other warrant but that. You must not expect any new revelations to warrant your coming to Christ; 2 Pet. i. 19. "We have also a more sure word of prophecy." The inward call is nothing else but the *opening of the ear*

*to*

*to hear* the outward call; the inward call is only that *illumination of the mind* whereby we see God calling of us in his word; the *assuring us of the truth of the gospel*. The call of God in his word is that which gives men their encouragment to come to Christ; the word of God it the ground of faith, Psal. xci. 4. "His truth shall be thy shield and buckler." The design of the inward call is only to *clear up* the outward call; and *satisfy* the heart in that. The outward call evidences men's safety in coming; there is God's testimony, and that is an evidence beyond exception, 1 John v. 9. God's *call* in *his word* makes it your duty to believe; but that it would not do, if it did not give you a sufficient *warrant* to believe: the inward call helps us to read and understand our warrant; but it is the outward call that gives warrant to believe. The outward call is the foundation of faith, Acts xiii. 48. "They glorified the word of the Lord, and believed." God speaks his heart in the outward call; men slight it, and say it is but an outward call. But the outward call is no delusion, God speaks uprightly in the outward call; there you may see the heart of God, how ready he is to bestow salvation upon sinners; and the outward call binds God's faithfulness. The outward call lays such a tie upon God, as makes the condition of believers very safe; Heb. x. 25. "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering, for he is faithful that promised."

Object. 11. *I have an unwilling spirit to come to Christ, and therefore I am not called; for the call is only to them that will*, Rev. xxii. 17. Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely.

*Ans.* 1. When God says, *whosoever will*, he does not *limit* the call to them that will; the offer is general, and therefore is made unto them that will not, as well as unto them that will. Men that are unwilling ought to come; men's duty does not depend upon their willingness to do it: God *commands* those that are *unwilling*. The generality of the Jews were not willing to come to Christ: yet God required them to come, John vi. 29. "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." God makes conditional promises unto such, and will punish such men for their not coming unto Christ. It will be a poor excuse at the last day, for men to say they were not willing; *out of their own mouth* God will *condemn them*.

When God says, whosoever will; he does *not require* any *antecedent willingness* befor their coming. The meaning is not, that men must first find themselves willing, and so come to Christ: men must not wait for a willing spirit, as a *ground of encouragement* to come to Christ, God does not require that men should be first willing, and then come; it is a *concomitant willingness* only that God does require, not an antecedent: for indeed no man is truly willing to believe in Christ, until he does so.

3. The meaning of it is, that there is *an universal liberty* given to men to come to Christ. He will bestow the blessing on none but those that will; and upon *any one* that will. The meaning is, that he will reject no man that will come, upon any defect whatever, upon any account that may be thought of. Whatever their out-

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ward condition be, whatever hearts they have, whatever their former life have been, whatever weakness there be in their faith; it is an universal offer without an exception.

Object. 12. *I am afraid I do not understand the meaning of the call: God promises life to them that believe; but there may be some* interruption *or other found out, that I did not think of: I fear I should but deceive myself, if I should come.*

*Ans.* You *scare yourself causelessly.* God has upon design so phrased the calls of the gospel, that all our scruples may be removed, John vi. 37. "He that cometh unto me, I will in nowise cast out." God has made our way plain to Christ. There can be no interpretation made contrary to the words of the call; and they bind the thing sure enough. There can be no interpretation contrary to the *glory of free grace,* which is the great thing that God does design. His design shall not fall to the ground. There can be no such interpretation as shall *rob Christ of his honour,* the honour of being a complete Saviour; yea there can be no such interpretation but what is *suitable to the necessity of sinners.* This way of salvation is proposed to be an help to us, and if we cannot have salvation in a way of free grace upon Christ's account, but that there must be some worthiness in us, it would be no help to us. If God did stand for any worthiness in us, we should be incapable of salvation.

Object. 13. *I am afraid, if I should believe, that I shall come in a* wrong *way, and then I shall be in a worse condition than I am now; then I shall go hoping to hell.*

*Ans*

*Ans.* If you come to Christ merely upon *gospel encouragements*, you cannot come in a wrong way. If you come indeed upon such encouragements as these, that you have *not much angered* God; that you have *pacified* him; that you have a great *love for* him; that you have *not been so bad* as other men; that your *heart is soft*, and broken for sin, &c. you do not come in the right way. But, if you come *merely* upon the *encouragements* that God sets before you in his word, you do not come in a right way. God offers salvation to you, and tells you, that his grace is free; that Christ has died for your sins; and, if this prevail upon you, that, though you are vile, yet there is virtue enough in Christ for the pardon of them: that God is a God of glorious *grace;* that his word is *true;* and if, upon the encouragement hereof, you come to Christ, God will not reject you. This is the faith that God calls for, Psal. xxxvi. 7. Psal. xci. 4. 2 Tim. i. 12.

Object. 14. *In this way of coming unto Christ, I must take all upon trust: we do not see that it is so; we cannot tell whether Jesus be the Christ, whether God does take delight in his sacrifice, and be willing to accept of us; it is so reported and recorded; but we do not know it to be so, but* must take it upon trust.

*Ans.* We must *indeed take things upon trust,* but it is upon *testimony of God.* If we must take it upon trust from man only, that would be hard; but it is not hard to take it upon trust from God. We have more for it, than against it; we have nothing against it, but vain conjectures and surmises. The things themselves are not incredible;

ible; this way of salvation is neither contrary to the justice of God, nor beyond the mercy of God. No man was ever able to give any demonstration against this way of salvation. Men scare themselves with vain scruples and ignorant imaginations of their own; and, are such *conjectures* and guessings to be set against the *testimony* of God? God has sent us word from heaven, that we may have salvation by Christ. He gives his witness unto it, and that may well sasisfy us; what God speaks, he will make good. If we receive the witness of men, the *witness of God is greater;* and we may safely venture our souls upon his word. God assures us, that it is so; and gives a large account in his word, how the thing is brought about. He gives us an account of the reason of it, the means and method of accomplishing it, and the design that is upon his heart, in such a way, as is exceeding *agreeable unto right reason;* removing all weighty objections that can arise in your hearts. If you will hearken unto cavils, and the pretences of reason, and stand off from Jesus Christ, you must expect to rue it another day. But, if you desire the good of your souls, and to escape those miseries that shall come upon an unbelieving world, reject temptations, and cast away all the vain arguments of your hearts, and accept of this glorious call, and build upon this sure foundation; you need not have any greater assurance than *God's word,* which will endure when heaven and earth shall fail. It is well for those men and women that have the word of God for their salvation. It is bad, building hopes of heaven upon men's fancies; but it is safe, building them upon God's word.

## CHAP. XI.

USE IV. Exhortation, *To Saints to live by Faith upon the Righteousness of JESUS CHRIST for your acceptance.*

USE IV. I SHALL *conclude* the discourse with an EXHORTATION to the *people of God*, to be often *renewing acts of dependence upon Christ's righteousness for your acceptance with God;* be believing on Christ for your acceptance, both *now* and *in the day of judgment*. A *great part of the life* of a Christian, lies in the *exercise of faith;* and, as you are to be exercising faith in Christ for other things, so especially for your acceptance and salvation. It is not enough that you have once ventured yourselves on Christ, and accepted of the tender of life made to you through him; but you must *live upon Christ* for acceptance all your days. You ought to be *always* in a believing frame, and never to put forth any act, contrary unto the act of faith, and very often to be renewing of the acts of faith for your acceptance. There are *many special occasions*, when it is duty so to do: as, when God is setting the offers of this grace before you *in his word*, and in the *sacrament* of the *Lord's Supper;* so when you meet with any *temptations*, to beat you off from this way of believing, when you have been contracting any *special guilt*, when you go before God in solemn *prayer*. And, besides what is to be done on such occasions as these, it is a duty to have the heart working, and carried out in this way at *other times;* and it will be so, where the heart is in a believing frame; men then will love to be thinking upon the precious righteousness

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of Christ, and putting forth acts of dependence thereupon. God requires you to be much in the exercise of faith ; 1 John v. 13. " Those things have I written to you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may believe on the name of the Son of God." This ought to be npon a *double* account.

1. This *is an honor due to God and Jesus Christ.* It becomes us to be putting honor upon them, by renewing those acts of faith. When a man is drawing his encouragement from the righteousness of Christ, and the free grace of God, prizing Christ's righteousness, satisfied with that, rejoicing in it, rolling himself upon it, he is putting honor thereupon ; and it is no more than it does deserve. It becomes us to be giving this glory unto God and Jesus Christ. When the acts of faith are much intermitted, and when there are any actings of unbelief, we do deny them their due honor ; but the exercise of faith is a practical acknowledgment of their glory ; and this is *one part* of that *way of holiness,* wherein the people of God are walking unto salvation. The *first act* of faith in Christ, is the fulfilling of the covenant ; *other acts* of faith, are a part of our attending that *way of holiness,* which is the way of life.

2. This is *the way of our comfort.* We need to be from time to time renewing the acts of faith, that we may live a comfortable life ; this is a way to have a stable and well grounded comfort ; for in this way of salvation, " God has given us everlasting consolation and good hope," 2 Thess. ii. 16. The actings of *unbelief* fill the

soul

soul with *trouble*. That saint must needs live a sorrowful life, that is much carried away with an unbelieving heart. Such a life is attended with many terrors and fears; unbelief is the sinking of the heart. The prevailings of a spirit of discouragement, bring a man into a most perplexed condition; and he that lives in a way of carnal confidence, will live a life of trouble: though at times his joy may be great, yet there will often be such discoveries of his heart, and convictions of his danger, as will fill his soul with fear and trembling. The only way to live a sweet and *comfortable* life, is to *live by faith* upon Christ. The actings of faith give rest unto the heart: there will be some measure of comfort, whereever faith is in exercise: though a man be in the dark about his condition, yet the very actings of faith will support his heart. Faith discovers a resting place for the soul; in the exercise of faith, the soul is receiving of encouragement; therefore faith is often expressed in Scripture by *joy*, Phil. iii. 3. Hab. iii. 18. Indeed there is a *sweetness* and *pleasingness* in the exercises of every grace, because they are suitable to that new nature that God has put into his saints; but there is a special sweetness in the exercise of faith, because the nature of it is to entertain a well-grounded comfort and encouragement. The very *actings of faith* have a great deal of comfort in them; and the *reflections* of the soul upon those acts of faith, have a great deal of comfort in them. Faith itself is comfortable, and the sight of faith is comfortable. Faith comforts, as it entertains the glad tidings of the gospel; as it discovers a door of hope. The sight of faith comforts, as it discovers a sure evidence of salvation.

In

In prosecuting of this USE, we shall consider *three things*.

1. That *saints are apt to be discouraged* from believing on the righteousness of Christ for acceptance.

2. *What their discouragements are*, together with *proposals* for the *removing* of them.

3. *What course saints should take*, that they may live by faith on Christ's righteousness, and not be discouraged.

I. Consider, *Saints are apt to be discouraged* from believing on the righteousness of Christ for acceptance.

There are *two sorts* of discouragements that Christians have with respect unto their acceptance. *One sort* is, when they are discouraged, as if they were *not accepted*; as if they were *not saints*, and in a state of salvation; their present state is dark unto them. And this arises either from God's dispensations towards them, or their carriages towards God. God lays afflictions upon them, exercises them with inward temptations, does not give assurance of his love; does not answer their prayers; does not quicken their hearts in his ordinances. And they are carried away with corruption; do not feel the working of love in their hearts; have not such spiritual hearts as others of the people of God; and so they are ready to sink, as if their present state were not a state of peace with God. The *other sort* of discouragement is, when they are *afraid to come* unto Christ for acceptance. They are called upon to believe, but are discouraged

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from that duty ; it does not enter into them, that God is so free to accept of them through Christ ; they dare not believe. And these two sorts of discouragements are generally companions, and go together, though not always. Usually, when Christians are discouraged as to their present state, they are also more backward to believe than at other times ; and their hearts are frighted, because of the greatness and number of their sins. And when they are in an unbelieving frame, they are many times discouraged, as if they were not saints ; and cannot discern those signs that they can see plain enough at another time. This latter sort of discouragements, whereby saints are discouraged from believing in Christ, is *that* we are now discoursing of ; and this discouraged frame, is one of those frames that are contrary to a believing frame.

There are *two other frames* in Christians, that are contrary to believing in Christ. One is a *slighty, careless,* and regardless frame of spirit, respecting acceptance with God, and eternal salvation. Mens hearts are sometimes so deeply engaged in the world, that they are little concerned about the state of their souls ; they have not the weight of it on their hearts, to make sure a part in Christ. Sometimes Christians are under the prevailings of a *senseless* spirit ; they have not sense nor solemnity enough upon their hearts to put forth an act of faith. The other is a *self-righteous* frame, whereby Christians are apt to be drawing of their encouragements for their acceptance with God from their own righteousness. But besides these, there is a discouraged frame of spirit, whereby saints are afraid to believe ; as if there were

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not encouragement enough to believe in the offers of Christ's righteousness to them. This discouraged frame of spirit, is *that* we shall *particularly consider of*, as being *directly contrary* to the *doctrine* of our safe appearing in Christ's righteousness, which has been cleared up in the former part of this discourse.

That saints are very apt to be discouraged from believing, is evident, from the *universal experience* of the people of God; they find it a difficult thing to live a life of faith, and find many *doubtings* arising in their hearts, many jealousies that their hearts are suggesting. They are apt to be discouraged from believing for other things, outward blessings, divine assistance, and whatever God has promised; and thus it is also with respect unto their *acceptance with God*. Were they not so apt to be discouraged, they would live a more sweet and comfortable life than they do. The disciples of Christ, were "slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have written, Luke xxiv. 25. Saints are ready to say, as he, I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips," Isa. vi. 5. Their faith would many times fail, if there were not special assistance given unto them; Luke xxii. 32. "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." The apostle *Paul* plainly implies, that he found great want of faith, when he expresses his care "to know Christ, and the power of his resurrection," Phil. iii. 10. And hence it is that God is so often stirring us up in his word to believe, and has appointed so *many means* for the confirmation and establishment of our faith. And, if we consider the state of the people of God, it is no wonder that they have many doubtings and risings of discouragement in their hearts.

hearts. For the same principles that do so discourage natural men, are in saints; though they be *in part mortified*, yet they do remain there; *ignorance* of God, *carnal reason*, *pride* of heart, are remaining in them; and *Satan* is busy to stir up jealousies in their hearts; he is striking at their faith, "casting in his fiery darts into them," Eph. vi. 16. And they have many discouraging temptations before their eyes, which are matter for carnal reason to work upon; which are next to be spoken unto.

II. Consider, *What their discouragements are*, together with *proposals* for the removing of them.

*Discour.* 1. The *unspeakable greatness* of the blessings that are offered in the gospel. He has a sense upon his heart, that it is a wonderful privilege to be brought into a state of acceptance with God; the favor of God is better than life. To be saved and translated from a mean condition in this world, into the highest heavens; to behold the face of God forever; to enjoy "pleasures forevermore at the right hand of God;" to be made "like the angels of God;" it is so great a thing that it will scarce enter into him; considering how mean and unworthy he is. If God had spoken of some little thing, of some more moderate felicity, he should not have stuck so much at it; but this is so inconceivably great, that he is jealous whether God be willing to bestow it upon him. The greatness of it puts him to a stand, and makes it more unlikely in his eyes. Sometimes, when he begins to rejoice in it, his heart checks him, and he fears it is too good news to be true. As the "disciples believed not

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for joy," Luke xxiv. 41 ; and, as it is spoken of them, Psal. cxxvi. 1. " When the Lord turned again the captivity of his people, we were like them that dream." The heart does not so stagger at lesser mercies ; but the sense of the *greatness of salvation*, makes it recoil, and and proves a temptation to unbelief. He doubts of it, and says, will God, in very deed do this thing ? When he would rejoice in the thoughts of it, he is pulled back by *fears*, that it will not be so. The greatness of it begets a secret damp upon his soul, lest it should not be true ; it seems incredible.

For the removal of this discouragement,

Consider, 1. *The infiniteness of God's mercy.* This is a great gift ; but it is not too great a gift for God to bestow : he has an heart large enough to entertain such purposes as this. Men are ready to think, that God will count it too much for them, and that a more moderate felicity were fitter for them. But the *mercy* of God is *unlimited ;* he does not envy man's blessedness ; he can find in his heart to bestow all this glory upon poor unworthy man. " God is rich in mercy," Eph. ii. 4. ; " Plenteous in mercy," Psal. ciii. 8. The greatest act of mercy, is not beyond the merciful nature of God. He can do any thing that is an act of mercy. His mercy is such, that it cannot be overcome with provocations ; but it can overcome the greatest provocations. His mercy is such, that it has *no dependance* upon man's worthiness. God has grace enough, not to give earthly blessings only, but heavenly blessings unto men. He has such mercy, as that he can bear to see men in the posses-

sion of heavenly glory, and not grudge at it, or think much of it. He has such mercy, as that he can take wonderful delight to see men happy.

2. *It is no impoverishing of God to bestow blessing upon you.* God is not the poorer for making you, and thousands of such as you, happy. God does not empty himself, and lose of his fulness; he has nevertheless for filling you. If a man that has much for himself, give any thing to you, he has the less for himself; and that makes men the more backward to give unto others; but it is not thus with God. The sun has not the less light for enlightening the world. God does bestow all his mercy and salvation, without any diminution to himself: He is not the less happy himself, by making you happy: He can spare all his glory to you, without any wrong to himself. Though this salvation be so great a thing, yet God can afford to give it. It is a *difficult* thing to men sometimes, to perform their engagements to others; but it is no difficult thing to God to perform his offers to you. "In my Father's house there is bread enough, and to spare," Luke xv. 17. God has not the less glory for himself, nor for any of his friends, by bestowing glory upon you.

3. *God made man capable of enjoying blessedness.* God has made man not only capable of worldly delights but he has given him an understanding, and free will, whereby he is capable of enjoying God himself. Man is made of such a nature, that he is capable of enjoying the presence of God; and being capable of it, he cannot be satisfied till he come to the enjoyment of him. He cannot rest, but in his centre; he cannot be happy till

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he enjoys his *proper object*. And surely God would never have created such a creature with *such capacity*, if he had not an heart to bring him to the enjoyment of himself, in a way of hearkening to his counsels. Why did God make such a creature, that should have such a *capacity*, and such desires, if he had not an heart to bestow this good upon him? God satisfies the desires of every living thing. Heavenly glory, though it be great, yet it is not too much for our need. He bestows upon the beasts of the earth, the fish of the sea, and fowls of heaven, such things as are suitable to their needs; and why should we think that God is unwilling to bestow upon man *what he needs*, if men will take the *directions* that he gives unto them?

4. *God has made heaven on purpose to bestow it upon men*; together with the angels. The earth was made for man, and so was heaven too. God raised this glorious building, on purpose to entertain men. "It is a kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world," Mat. xxv. 34. "God has prepared for them a city," Heb. xi. 16. This was one of the first works that God ever did, to prepare this place of blessedness for men. He did not need any heaven for himself; he was infinitely happy before heaven was made: but he made it on purpose for such as shall come to Christ. How then can we think that God is unwilling to bestow it upon them? Now it is made, he will not say it is too good for them. He turned man indeed out of *Paradise* that was made for him, because that was made for him only, so long as he retained his integrity; but the heavenly paradise was made for such as will come unto Christ.

5. *This*

5. *This is but proportionable to that design that is upon the heart of God.* Men do not stick to do great things for the accomplishing of designs that lie much upon their hearts. Princes will be at vast expence to show their magnificence; the artist will take a great deal of pains to shew his skill; and God has a design upon his heart to manifest his glory, and has done great things for that end. He made this glorious fabric of heaven and earth, to be as a glass wherein his glory is represented; and the eternal salvation of such as you is greatly subservient to this end, Eph. 1. 5, 6. Eph. ii. 6, 7. Here is nothing in this contrary to God's glory; nothing that is an hindrance to it; but it suits that end. The mercy of God is much honored by his pardoning and saving of sinners. Mic. vii. 18. Herein is seen what free *compassion* is in the heart of God. It is much for the glory of God, to lead sinners through all the difficulties of the way unto heaven; it is much for the glory of God, notwithstanding all their unworthiness, to bestow heaven upon them. It is much for the glory of God, to have multitudes in heaven to be spectators and admirers of his glory; John xvii. 24. "That they may be with me where I am, to behold my glory, which thou hast given me."

6. *There has been a great price paid for it.* If you had kept the covenant of works, and been perfectly obedient unto God, without any defect, you would not have doubted of God's readiness to accept of you, and save you; but here is a fair way made for your acceptance and salvation. God is fully satisfied for every jot of that glory that he promises unto you. Jesus Christ has paid the *full price* of it, according to the tenor of the covenant. It is a due debt to all that are partakers of the righteousness

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of Christ ; It is an act of justice in God to bestow salvation upon them. Heavenly glory is purchased glory ; Eph. i. 14. " Until the redemption of the purchased possession."

*Discour.* 2. *The many sins that he has been guilty of.* Sometimes a saint has a dismal *frightful* apprehension of his sins ; they appear to him as a dark cloud. He knows that God is an holy and a jealous God ; he speaks dreadfully in his word against sinful practices, and has brought dreadful judgment upon angels and men for their sins ; & hence he is fearful that God will not pardon him. His sins prove his great temptation. Hence his heart is still harping upon that string, that God is an holy, sin-revenging God ; and that he hath been guilty of abundance of sin ; Psal. xl. 12. " Mine iniquities take hold of me, so that I am not able to look up ; they are more than the hairs of my head, therefore my heart faileth me."

And there are *two things* especially, that prove matter of temptation, and make him afraid to believe. *One thing* is, the *many aggravations* that he sees in his sins. He sins against light, against covenant, notwithstanding abundance of mercy, with a great deal of perverseness ; they have reiterated sins, after bewailings of the same ; they have sinned with deliberation, their sins seem to have exceeded the limits of pardoning mercy. The *other* thing is, that they fear that their sins do speak and *evidence their hypocrisy.* They are apt to think they should not, they could not do so, if they were hypocrites ; they fear that such carriages are not consistent with grace ; and thence they are much discouraged. They think, if

they have been hypocrites all this while, there is very little hope for them; that would be such a provocation, that they fear God would never pardon it; the fear of their hypocrisy makes them fearful to cast themselves upon Christ.

For the *removal* of this discouragement,

Consider 1. *That the law of God leaves as much room for the pardon of great sins as of little ones.* Lesser sins and greater sins are all mortal by the law; by the sentence of the law one sin is as certainly destructive as a thousand. "The wages of sin is death," Rom. vi. 23. And the law does allow of the pardon of multitudes as well as of one. The law allows of the pardon of sin, provided there be satisfaction; the law stands upon it to have punishment; but it does not stand for *personal* punishment; in case of great sins, no more than in case of little sins, the law makes no distinction; but it gives as much liberty for the pardon of great offenders, as of lesser. There is no title that way in the covenant of works, that great sinners must die *in their own persons.* The thing that the law looks at, is, that sin be punished according to the demerit thereof; that the justice of God be vindicated but God does not bind up his own hands, that he may not forgive great sinners; he reserves that liberty to himself in the law, of punishing any sins in a *surety*, and so of pardoning them. The law admits of the pardon of any sin, if there be *satisfaction.* The reason that the sin against the *Holy Ghost* is unpardonable, is not from any thing in the covenant of works, but because God, when he provided a surety, made an *exception* of that sin. But if sin be punished,

punished, the law is satisfied. The law does not forbid the pardon of great sinners; that is evident because God does pardon great sinners; Luke vii. 47. "Her sins, which are many, are forgiven."

2. *Jesus Christ has satisfied for great sins and great sinners, as well as lesser.* When God sent Jesus Christ, it was in his liberty to appoint him to die for what sin and sinners he pleased. Christ Jesus was capable of satisfying for one, as well as for another; for he was so worthy a person, that he was capable, by his sufferings, to expiate the greatest sins. His short sufferings were sufficient to satisfy for the greatest offences; and God did put that work upon him, to satisfy for great sins, and he has discharged it. He has satisfied for great offenders; Christ has paid a price of redemption for the greatest sins, one excepted. Therefore, generally, in Scripture it is said, that he has made reconciliation for sins, without any exception. "He bare our sins," 1 Pet. ii. 24. "He is the propitiation for our sins," 1 John ii. 2. "He has purged our sins," "Heb. i. 3. Yea, the Scripture testifies, "that his blood cleanseth us from all sin," 1 John i. 7. He died for the chiefest sinners, as is implied, 1 Tim. i. 15. and therefore sinners, without distinction, are invited to come to Christ for forgiveness.

3. *God's manner is to suffer a great deal of sin to remain in his people here.* He could if it pleased him, purge it out all at once; but he suffers it to be otherwise, for many great ends; as, to *magnify his power*, in preserving the seed of grace, notwithstanding all that opposition which is made by Satan, and their own corruption; so, to carry on the work of sanctification in such a manner, as that they shall stand in *continual need of justification*

and

and pardon; and among other ends this is not the least, to *try the faith* of his people, and exercise *that*. There be none of the people of God, but are attended with a great deal of sin. So was *Noah, Jacob, Asa, Jehosaphat,* and *Paul;* Rom. vii. 23. "I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin that is in my members." And that shews, that God can love those that have a great deal of sin in them; and that he can pardon them. His suffering of it to be in *his own,* evidences the sufficiency of grace to pardon it.

4. *God is as free to pardon hypocrites as other men, if they come unto Jesus Christ.* The people of God are afraid many times that they are hypocrites; but that should not discourage them from believing. *Hypocrites* are as welcome to come unto Christ, as saints. God does not exclude those that have lived long in a way of hypocrisy. They may come with freedom of spirit notwithstanding. Men should not suspend the exercise of faith until it be cleared up to them that they are no hypocrites. When they are most in the dark about their estate, their way is to "trust in the name of the Lord, and stay themselves upon their God," Isaiah l. 10. If you should be hypocrites, there is encouragement enough to receive the gospel. God has pardoned thousands that have spent a great deal of time in hypocrisy. Were not the *Jews* that Christ and the apostles offered salvation to, generally hypocrites? Had not *Paul* lived a great while in a way of hypocrisy? and *Nicodemus?* God rejects not any man that accepts of Jesus Christ, though he has been an hypocrite.

*Discour.*

*Discour.* 3. *That God passes by many others, and does not bestow salvation upon them; there be many whole nations that God passes over, and leaves to perish, and many particular men among his visible people.* "Many are called, but few are chosen," Mat. xx. 16. And they cannot see any reason why God should bestow salvation upon them, when he does deny it to multitudes of others: *why God should make such a difference between them and others.* When they are called on to believe on Christ, they are *afraid* to do it; it damps their hearts to think that there are so *few* that God does save; so many rejected; and they can see nothing in themselves to incline the heart of God to them: God passes over many wise men, noble men, valient men, rich men, learned men, good natured men, men of great accomplishments, and does not bestow salvation on them. If they could but see any reason why God should set his heart upon them, and make such a difference between them and others, it would not be so hard to them to believe; but when they consider what kind of men God has cast off and rejected, it makes them fear that God will reject them also: the severity of God upon others, discourages them, as if there were little likelihood of their salvation. They are frighting of themselves, as if there were little hopes for them. It is a sinking thing to them, that many men *more probable* than they, have fallen short of salvation. If they could *give a reason* why God should set his heart upon them, when he rejects others, it would mightily satisfy them; but because they cannot, they are full of doubts.

For the *removal* of this discouragement,

Consider, 1.

Consider, 1. The *only reason* why God sets his love on one man, and not upon another, is, *because he pleases*. He acts the sovereignty of his own will in it; it is his own will that makes the difference between men; 1 Cor. 4, 7. "Who maketh thee to differ from another, and what hast thou that thou hast not received?" Rom. ix. 15. "I will have mercy upon whom I will have mercy." God, in loving of men, acts *arbitrarily*; he acts as the *potter*, in forming his vessels to *divers uses*, out of the same lump. The will of God is sufficient to move him to choose one, and refuse another; he can bestow his love upon men, where there is nothing in them to draw it; the will of God can act *independently*, and indeed it cannot have a dependence upon any other thing. There is nothing out of God that can incline the will of God; all those things that men are apt to suppose to have an influence upon the will of God have indeed a dependence upon his will. There is nothing in any man to sway the will of God any way. There is nothing in any man to be an argument with the Lord to love him; nothing that can work upon the affection of God to make God love him. He has *no excellency* that can persuade the Lord to love him: whatever beauty, understanding, good nature he has, those things cannot sway God. God is not taken with those excellencies and accomplishments that are in men, as to have his heart fastened and allured to them thereby. And, on the other hand, there is nothing in man that can hinder God from loving of him. If the man be weak in understanding, of contemptible and wicked parents, and his outward condition mean, yet God can set his heart upon him. There is nothing in man that can biass the

will

will of God either way, to love him or hate him; but God herein acts from his *mere pleasure.*

2. Hence it follows, that *this or that particular man is as capable of being loved of God as any other in the world.* God has manifested special love unto thousands of men and women, and you are as capable an object of divine love as any of them. You are as capable as *Abraham, Moses, David, Paul,* or any other. It is true, you are as capable of God's *hatred* also, as any other. The *mere pleasure* of God does decide it, who shall be the objects of his *love* and his *hatred.* You have no reason to be discouraged, because you can find *no reason* in *yourself* of God's love: Those that God did set his love upon, could find no reason in themselves of God's love. Though you be mean and despicable, yet you are capable to be an object of God's love as any other. I do not say, that one man is under as *great likelihood* as another; they that God brings under means, are the children of Godly parents, that God is striving with by his Spirit; are more likely than others; but one is as *capable* as the other; for the free will of God is the only thing that does determine it; and therefore you have sufficient ground of encouragement to accept the offer of salvation.

3. *If God has wrought a spirit of faith and holiness in you, that is a manifestation that God has set his love upon you.* Though you can find no reason why God should love you, cannot tell why God should have any respect unto you; yet it is certain he does love you, if you have a gracious change wrought in you, Though he cast away

thousands

thousands of greater natural and acquired endowments than you, and of greater external enjoyments than you, yet you are one of those that he has chosen, and has set his heart upon: 2 Tim. i, 9. "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began."

Discour. 4. *They find things since their coming to Christ much contrary to their expectation.* They thought that they should have had *more expressions of the love* of God, more *quickenings* of the spirit, more *help* against *corruption*, more visible *answers of prayers*: they thought that if they came to Christ, they should have had little trouble or temptation, but have lived a *sweet, easy and pleasant life.* But things are far otherwise; things run very low in their souls; they have a great deal of *darkness and temptation*, they find very *evil workings* of heart; and therefore they fear whether God has accepted of them, or be willing to accept of them, and to bestow salvation upon them. Did they walk in the light of the Lord, and enjoy such communion with God as they expected, and feel such evident fruits of the love of God, as they promised themselves, they should not be so backward to believe; but since it is *otherwise*, it begets a trembling and fearfulness in them, it puts them to a great stand: hence the calls of God take less impression on them; especially, because they think it is *not so* with *others* that come to Christ. Others do enjoy more manifest tokens of divine acceptance, but they are both in inward and outward respects under tokens of divine displeasure. And this is an hinderance unto their believing;

Job.

Job ix. 16, 17. "If I had called, and he had answered yet would I not believe that he had hearkened to my voice; for he breaketh me with a tempest, and multiplieth my wounds without cause."

For the *removal* of this discouragement,

Consider, 1. *That many sad and sorrowful dispensations are consistent with the favor of God.* Men are ready to think that if God delighted in them, he could not find in his heart to exercise them in such a manner: his compassion would work so towards them, that they should not experience such sorrows. But men greatly mistake. It is true, that all the ways of God are mercy to them that fear him; but yet many times his ways are in appearance contrary unto love. It is common with God to bring those that he has rejected into a prosperous condition; they are under very smiling providences. And, on the other hand, God frequently *frowns* upon his *own children*, not only in external dispensations, but also by inward darkness, leaving them to conflict with sore temptations. The *love* of God to his people, is *not an affection*, as love in men is; but it is a *design to make them happy*: Not to bestow all those degrees of blessedness upon them that he can, but it is subserviency to a *greater design*, even the glory of his name. And therefore he leads them to happiness, in such a way as is conducible to the manifestation of the glory of his pardoning grace, his holiness and sovereignty. And it is frequent with God to lay very *heavy afflictions* upon his *dearest children*; Psal. lxxiii. 14. "All the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning." And God

leaves *his* sometimes to a great deal of inward darkness; Psal. lxxxviii. 15. "While I suffer thy terrors I am distracted." Men that "fear the Lord, may be in darkness, and have no light," Isai. l. 10. The dispensations of God unto *Job*, and the issue of the controversy between him and his friends, stand upon record, to satisfy the hearts of God's people in all ages in this particular.

2. *God does sometimes withdraw from his own children the sensible quickenings of his Spirit.* God never takes away wholly his sanctifying presence from his people. God is present with them to uphold the *being of grace*: there is a divine manutenancy whereby God does preserve the life of grace at all times; but the sensible quickenings of his Spirit may be often withheld. God may often so far withdraw, that they may not perceive any special gracious operation of the Spirit upon their hearts; and that as at other times, so in *duties of worship*, they may be *left* many times under great *dulness* and *senselessness*; left much to the stoniness of their own hearts, without any special impressions made on them by the Spirit of God. There are times when God makes their hearts burn within them. But there are times when they are left unto a *benumbed* frame of spirit, as if they had no *spiritual senses*. They have great cause of joy, but their hearts do not rejoice therein; great cause of sorrow, but unaffected with it; great cause of fear, but fearless. Their senses are bound up, and spiritual truths that they think of, or hear of, do not sink into them; Mat. xxv. 5. "They all slumbered and slept."

3. *The people of God ought not to count it a frown*

*that*

*that they have not the immediate light of God's countenance frequently.* We must have a care that we do not complain without cause. The sealings of God's Spirit are wonderful mercies; and *special* and more *immediate discoveries of the love of God,* are glorious enjoyments. But it is not God's manner with his people to give them frequently. When God bestows them, he expects that men should go in the strength of them many days. *Paul* was but once *caught up to paradise* in his lifetime, 2 Cor. xii. 3. God has many other ways to support the hearts of his people.

4. *God's manner is, to be training up his people to live a life of faith; to be depending upon him according to his word.* He is striving to bring his saints to live upon his *promise;* he does in his providences put them upon that; he takes away other props, that they may lean upon the promise more; they shall have time enough hereafter to see things; in heaven faith will be swallowed up in vision. But here he would have them *live by faith* upon his word. The people of God are apt to have too much dependence upon signs, and to lay more weight upon them than upon the word of God; trusting more to *signs,* and sometimes to fallible ones, than they do unto the infallible testimony of God: and upon that account, God many times takes signs away. Christians have enough left them to live upon when signs are gone. God many times considers the weakness of his saints, as he did the weakness of *Thomas,* John xx. 27. But yet he is by degrees bringing them more off from a dependence upon signs, to live upon his bare *word.* They are apt to make too much of their signs, and too little of his word; there-

fore

fore he takes them away, that they may have only his word to trust to ; 2 Cor. v. 7. " For we walk by faith and not by sight."

*Discour.* 5. *They fear they were never thoroughly converted.* They cannot make it out to their own satisfaction, that they have an interest in Christ ; they take notice of *many things* that make it *doubtful* unto them. And if it should be so that they should not be converted, then they cannot believe aright until first they have a work of preparation ; they must come to be convinced that they are in a natural condition, that they never did any spiritual duty, that they are under the reigning power of sin, before they can come to Christ in a right manner ; this faith will be but a counterfeit faith : if they be hypocrites now, they shall be so, until they have a work of *legal humiliation* wrought in them ; therefore they dare not cast themselves on Christ ; they think their next work is to resolve the case, whether they be converted or no.

For the *removal* of this discouragement,

Consider, 1. *That the call of the gospel is sufficient encouragement to them that know not whether they be converted or unconverted.* If a man knows that he is unconverted, yet there is encouragement enough in it : if he be at a loss whether he be converted or not, yet there is sufficient encouragement in it ; for the call is, to "every one that will," Rev. xxii. 17. So that they that are at a loss about their present condition, have free liberty to come as well as others. God requires no more of any man but acceptance of the call ; so that there is no bar in any man's way ; you are capable of accepting the call

and

and if you do accept it, God is engaged by promise to save you.

2. Though you do not know whether you are converted or not, yet *if God discovers this way of salvation by Christ unto you, you cannot stay away from him.* When God lets in a spiritual light into the heart of a man, clearing up this way of life to him, he will not stand harping upon this objection, or any other, but will venture himself upon Jesus Christ. When God satisfies the heart in this way, he will not stay for satisfaction in this question, whether he be converted or no. He will see encouragement enough in Christ, whatever he is or has been; John vi. 45. "Every one that hath heard and learned of the Father, cometh unto me."

3. If, when you are at a loss about your conversion, *you can venture upon Jesus Christ merely upon gospel encouragements, that is a sign that you are converted.* The actings of faith on Christ from the apprehension of *his excellency,* having no dependence on that, that you are, or have hopes that you are, in a good estate already, is a sign of a good estate; Phil. iii. 3. "We rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh."

*Discour.* 6. That they have a slighty and *unbroken heart;* they have *not a due sense of sin;* they have been provoking of God by sinful carriages, and have not a due sense of their iniquities upon their hearts; and they think it would be a daring and presumptuous thing to go presently and rejoice in Christ; they have more need to get a broken heart first, to get their heart affected with sin, to be stirring up a spirit of *self-loathing* and *hatred*

*of sin.* God expects a contrite and a broken spirit; we had need have our hearts loaded and burdened with sin, before we come unto Christ for pardon.

For the *removal* of this discouragement,

Consider, 1. *That it is no presumption to come unto Christ and rejoice in him, how sinful soever you be:* though you feel your heart very hard, though you have just now done somewhat provoking unto God, and have not yet bewailed it before God, nor been labouring with your own heart to work the sense of the evil of it upon your own heart. It is a presumptuous thing to sin; men are too bold and daring when they take upon them to cross the commands of God. And it is a presumptuous thing to make light of sin, because Christ has died, and salvation is procured by him. Sin is never the less heinous because Christ has died. God's *mercy* in pardoning of sin, should make us *more sensible of the evil of it.* But it can be no presumption to come to Christ, though the heart be hard and senseless; because there is enough in *Christ* for such as are hard-hearted: there is that preciousness in the blood of Christ, that it has procured remission of sin for such; 1 Pet. i. 19. And pardon is freely offered to you, Acts x. 33. "Whosoever believeth on him, shall receive remission of sins." And it is no presumption for you to accept of what God freely offers unto you; and indeed if your eyes be opened to see the *glorious excellency* of Christ, and the grace of God, you will not make an excuse of an hard heart.

2. *Entertaining the calls of the gospel, is the way to have a spirit of repentance.* It is *meet* that you should *repent,*

*pent,* and *have your hearts broken* for your sins; but the way to come at it, is, to entertain the gospel offer. There are *other means* in their place to be used; but a principal means in order to repentance, is, to *receive Christ;* believing in Christ is the way to have grace quickened and strengthened. Faith in Christ is the greatest furtherance of repentance and holiness. Faith discovering the grace of God in Jesus Christ, melts the heart for sin, and arms the heart against it. And faith in Christ, is the great ordinance of the gospel, for the subduing of sin. In this way, God will give his Spirit to work repentance and holiness; Gal. ii. 20. "I live by faith in the Son of God;" John vi. 56. "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him."

III. The *next* thing to be *considered,* is, *what course Christians should take,* that they may *live a life of faith upon Christ's righteousness,* and not be discouraged.

*Direct.* 1. *Diligently attend the ordinances of God unto that end.* The ordinances of God have a tendency to stir up *faith,* as well as *other graces;* and it is in that way that God has promised his presence and Spirit. God delights to be found in ways appointed by himself. God has *not said* that we should "seek him in vain," Isai. xlv. 19. Christ will be present with them in those ways, Mat. xxviii. 20. God's very prescribing of means is an encouragement unto us to attend upon them, especially when he has annexed his promise to the same. If men be *remiss* and *slighty* in attending upon *God's ordinances,* they are not likely to thrive in faith, or any other grace; it would be no wonder if they should wither away

away, and live in a dark discouraged condition: but, if Christians be careful to attend ordinances, and improve them for the strengthening of their faith, they are in a hopeful way to thrive. No wonder if there be a blast upon the *inventions* of men; but experience teaches the people of God to say, "it is good for us to draw nigh unto God," Psal. lxxiii. 26. God can make faith to flourish without ordinances; and so he can maintain mens bodily strength, without food. He can reveal himself to those that seldom wait upon him; but his manner is, to deal out his spiritual gifts at *his own gates*. He can make them flourish elsewhere if he please; but he chooses to do it in his *own courts*, Psal. xcii. 13, 14. The *Psalmist* might have understood the end of the wicked in another place, if God had pleased; but he chose to give him the understanding of it "in the sanctuary," Psal. lxxiii. 17. God has appointed the place where we shall meet with him, and there we must *wait for him*. If men desire to flourish in faith, they must be diligently improving ordinances that way. God loves to *honour* his *own ordinances*, and help his people in a way of obedience; and give forth his presence in such a way, that they may see his *faithfulness* as well as his *mercy*. Beware that you do not, under any pretences, grow negligent in waiting upon God. Some men are carried away with a *sluggish* spirit; they cannot endure to take the pains to wait upon God, constantly and solemnly; they love their ease, and indulge themselves in a lazy way of carrying on end their religion. And some are carried away with a *worldly* spirit; they are *Martha*-like, *cumbering* themselves with *much business*; involving themselves so deep in the world, that they can find

find little leisure to wait upon God: their worldly business overrules their religion. If you give way to these lusts, conclude upon it that you will not thrive in faith. You must be content with a little faith, that give way to a slighty spirit in waiting upon God. You never knew an eminent believer that was not a great *prizer of ordinances*; in this way, there is hope that faith will increase, therefore diligently attend them.

Particularly,

1. *Read the word of God diligently.* It is very useful to this end, to *read* the *writings* of faithful and experienced men; such *books* are of great use for the understanding of the *Scripture.* But there is a peculiar usefulness in the word of God itself, because that is without error and mistake: "it is given by inspiration from God," 2 Tim. iii. 16. In other mens writings you have the judgment of men: and many times their judgments are according to the word of God, and cleared up from thence; but, in the Scripture, you have the testimony of God himself; there is a divine authority in the Scripture. The Scripture is the sentence of God, a message from God; it is clothed with divine majesty. The word of God has a power over the conscience; there is secret virtue in it to stir up faith; there is a majesty and commanding authority in the Scripture. Yea, the Scripture is sanctified by God, to work upon the hearts of men; John xx. 31. "These are written, that ye might believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." There is a special advantage in it, to hear God speaking in his own language.

2. *Frequently*

2. *Frequently attend the preaching of the word.* That which God makes use of, especially for the begetting of faith, is very proper for the nourishing of it; Rom. x. 17. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." This is an *ordinance*, as well as the reading of the word. And there is a special usefulness in it *several ways*. The *life and zeal* that is in the *delivery*, is of special use, and a great means to affect the heart. In the preaching of the word, counsels and encouragements are directed more particularly unto them; and that by *those* that *God has set over them*, that must give an account of their souls, Acts xx. 28. Yea, the very *solemnity* of the *assembly*, does help to solemnize the heart, and prepare it to receive what is spoken from the word of God. And therefore you should be forward to take opportunities for the hearing of the word. Men had need have weighty grounds, before they remove to such *places* where they are likely to live many years without the preaching of the word; or to such places, that they and their families can seldom come to the *public assembly*: And you had need be careful, that you do not make *frivolous excuses* to stay away from the house of God. If the weather be difficult, or if there be some small bodily indisposition, many count they have a good warrant to stay at home: Persons that could overlook such difficulties in a worldly design. And although there be more liberty, respecting *weekly* opportunities, especially in neighbour places, yet you had need have the weight of those *two things* upon your heart, that you do not cast contempt upon the ordinances of God, and that you do not neglect the advantages that God gives for spiritual profit; Psal. cxxii. 1. "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord."

3. *Attend*

3. *Attend the sacrament of the* LORD'S SUPPER. The great design of this ordinance, is, for the stengthening of faith; therein is offered to us special communion with a crucified Saviour. Therein is a sacramental representation made before us of the *death of Christ.* Therein is a special offer made unto us of the blood of Christ, for the remission of sins, Mat. xxvi. 26, 27, 28. Herein the hearts of God's people have had peculiar establishment. Some, when in a discouraged condition, are *backward to come to this ordinance.* The *devil* has a great hand in it, to keep them from that which is the means of help. They are afraid that they "shall eat and drink judgment to themselves." But God nowhere requires a faith of assurance in those that partake of that ordinance. This ordinance is a special help to those that are in the dark. And though it must be granted, that, to partake of it without faith is a sin, and so deserves damnation; and so it does, to *pray* or *hear* without *faith*: yet, when the Apostle says, that "he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation or judgment to himself," 1 Cor. xi. 29. he intends particularly, that evil of *not distinguishing* this eating and drinking from common eating or drinking; doing it either *ignorantly* or *profanely*: therefore he adds, "not discerning the Lord's body."

4. *Be earnest with God in* PRAYER, *for the strengthening of faith.* Christ prayed for *Peter* on this account, Luke xxii. 32. and on the same account we should pray for ourselves. *Prayer* is the way to win any thing that we need from God. Importunate prayer, is like the *sword of Saul, that returned not empty.* Though the

people

people of God are compassed with infirmities, yet their prayers are very prevailing. *Elias was a man of like passions,* yet his prayers were successful. God loves to gratify his people; he takes delight in the exercise of their graces in prayer: he loves to encourage them in waiting on him according to his appointment: therefore constantly attend this duty; and be much in *secret prayer.* Be often pouring out your heart unto him; this is your duty, Mat. vi. 6. And in this way Christians have *much communion* with God, whereby their faith is strengthened. Such Christians as can make shift so to stifle their consciences, as to be negligent in this duty, lose a great advantage for their flourishing in faith and holiness.

5. In case of need, *advise with those that can help you.* When under *darkness* and *temptation,* have recourse to such as can direct you; that can speak *words in season to them that are weary.* Make use of such as are skilful and faithful. Some, out of *fearfulness or pride,* or through ignorance of their duty, go with an heavy load upon their hearts a long while; whereas it may be, their scruples might be easily answered, if they would have recourse to those that have skill. By the blessing of God, they might soon be led into such a way, that they might have comfort; Job xxxiii. 23. "If there be a messenger with him, an interpreter, one among a thousand, to shew unto man his uprightness." God fits some men to discover mens uprightness unto them, and to shew them how to get it. Have recourse to such as *may be able to comfort you, with the comfort whereby they themselves are comforted of God.*

6. *Rely upon God in Christ, to maintain faith in you.*

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It is needful to have all your expectation from him. If men be in the use of means for the strengthening of faith, and trust to their own endeavors, they give God occasion to blast their labors, and leave them to the doubtings and discouragements of their own hearts. No wonder if God lets them fall, that trust to their own strength. You are not able to maintain a spirit of faith in yourselves, nor to fortify your hearts against discouragements, by any power or wisdom of your own; therefore it is fit you should depend on God in Christ, to work it in you. Christ is our undertaker to preserve faith; Heb. xii. 2. "He is the author and finisher of faith." Therefore, be not proud of your own strength; but, under a sense of your own inability, rely on Christ to work it in you continually.

*Direct.* 2. *Get a more clear, large and distinct understanding of this way of salvation by Jesus Christ.* Many Christians are exposed unto temptation by their ignorance; though they know that that is a sufficient foundation for faith; yet they are but *rude* in knowledge, greatly to seek about many things that they need to know for the establishing of their faith. Many Christians fall under that reproof; Heb. v. 12. "Ye have need that one teach you again, which be the first principles of the oracles of God." It is a great help against discouragement, to have a *clear knowledge* of the *gospel.* The highest degree of literal knowledge, is not sufficient to make a man believe; but without *literal knowledge,* there can be no faith; and, without a considerable measure of it, you will be in great danger to be outbid with such temptations, as you might easily see through if you had

more knowledge. And therefore the apostle exhorts them to grow in the knowledge of Christ, 2 Pet. iii. 18. Christians should be "able to give the reason of the hope that is in them," 1 Pet. iii 15. When they are under doubts, a little information about the way of salvation by the gospel, does remove their doubts. Therefore labor to get a distinct knowledge of the gospel, that you may be able to give account of the design of God in it, as it is revealed in the gospel; of the *equity* of it, and its *consistency* with the *law*; of the *absolute freedom* of the grace of God; of the *true reason* why Christ died; of the *terms* of the *covenant of grace*; and of the *manner* of God's dealing with his, *when* he brings them into union with Christ, and *after* their union with him. A clear knowledge of *these* and *such like things*, are of great advantage unto faith, two ways:

1. *It supplies us with arguments to prove this way of salvation.* Hereby men are furnished with strong reasons for the confirmation of their faith. These things do shew, that the salvation of a believer is built upon a strong foundation. By reason of mens ignorance, they are strangers to many things that would confirm their faith. There be many things in the gospel that would clear it up to men, if they did know them, that it is impossible that believers should fail of salvation. Men might, if they had *more knowledge*, be able many ways to prove undeniably, that it is a safe thing for them to come to Christ.

2. *It supplies us with answers to temptations and many carnal reasonings.* The strength of many of those reasonings

sonings that prove perplexing to the people of God, lies in their *ignorance*. Many temptations would presently vanish, if men had more understanding. The objections that many times men are perplexed with, are easily answered, by those that are more *skilful in the word of righteousness*. There is enough in the gospel to satisfy their scruples, if they did but understand it. Many things that are great stumbling-blocks to them, would not puzzle them at all, if they had more knowledge.

*Direct.* 3. *Have no dependence upon signs.* It is a great fault of the people of God, that when they are called to believe, they are waiting for signs. Sometimes God gives his people signs, and sometimes he denies signs unto them. When God gives signs, it is a duty to take notice of them; when he gives them we must improve them for the strengthening of faith. It was a sin in *Ahaz* to refuse a sign, Isa. vii. 12. God many times considers the weakness of his people, and gives them signs which are a strengthening unto hope, Rom. v. 4. And it is lawful to desire signs out of a sensibleness of the unbelief of our own hearts; under the sense of that, that we are easily outbid with temptations; that our unbelieving hearts are ready to take advantage from the want of such evidences. We may desire signs, but it is not lawful to desire them from unbelief. Unbelief is never good, nor any natural effect of it. We have no reason to lie waiting for signs, when we have the word of God to encourage us to believe, Matt. xvi. 4. God has sometimes sharply shewed his anger, when his people have neglected the promise, waiting for signs; he has brought sharp afflictions upon them, Luke

i. 11,—20. Indeed, sometimes God has granted the desires of his people when they have been unbelieving, and have desired signs; but he does not therein shew his approbation of those desires; he condescends, because of the infirmities of his people; so he did to *Gideon*; but *Gideon's* heart smote him for what he did, Judges vi. 39. So Christ condescended to *Thomas*, but withal reproved him, John xx. 29. Therefore never wait for *signs*: have no dependence upon them.

Consider, 1. *When God denies signs, there is a sufficient foundation for faith.* God never leaves his people without a sufficient ground for faith. It is no sign that a man is not in favor with God, that God takes away signs; and there is a firm bottom for faith, when signs are withdrawn. "Such as have no light, may trust in the name of the Lord," Isa. l. 10. God's *call* is a sufficient warrant to believe.

2. *God many times withdraws signs to draw forth the more glorious acts of faith.* When men have got signs, they are very ready to live upon them, and lay more weight upon them, than on the stability of the word of God; and God takes away those crutches, that men may learn to go without them. Men are brought into such a condition, that they may have nothing else to rely upon, but the *word of God*, 2 Cor. i. 9.

3. *God takes great delight in the acts of faith, at such a time when signs fail.* Acts of faith at such a time, put a great deal of honour upon God; and God does greatly approve of such a faith. God does not reckon men bold and presumptuous for believing at such a time. God

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loves to see men with the shield of faith, defending themselves from all temptations. This is a faith very commendable in the sight of God: and God will eminently reward his people, for believing on him at such a time. A man cannot please God better, than by exercising faith under such circumstances. Under this consideration, *Abraham's* faith is commended, "that against hope he believed in hope," Rom. iv. 18. And Jesus Christ commends the faith of the woman of *Canaan*; when under great temptation, yet she would rely upon him; Mat. xv. 28. "O woman, great is thy faith! be it unto thee, even as thou wilt."

*Direct.* 4. *Beware of frowardness and discontent.* Frowardness is one great cause of discouragement and unbelief. Men get into a discontented frame, and then they do not know how to believe; their spirits are disordered by the dispensations of God unto them; because God brings great and long afflictions upon them; does not hear their prayers; does not give them those inward comforts that he does unto others; and when their spirits are distempered with discontent, they are greatly disadvantaged to receive the encouragement that God offers unto them. Discontent is an enemy unto faith; therefore beware of a discontented spirit; when you are under any rebukes of providence, look to your spirits, and labour against the first stirrings of a froward spirit; the workings of frowardness do prove a temptation to unbelief; and so do the workings of any other corruption, as the sinfulness thereof does fright a man from believing. But this is not all; a *froward spirit* leads a man into unbelief; it is a principle and cause of unbelief.

And that these *two ways :*

1. *Frowardness blinds the minds of men.* Frowardness bereaves men of their understandings ; passion draws a veil before the eyes. God presents before men several encouragements to believe ; but those things do not sink into mens hearts, when discontented. A man in a discontented frame, is out of frame to *consider the weight* of those things that God sets before him ; discontentedness makes him rashly, and inconsiderately, to reject encouragements. When God is encouraging him, he does not hearken and regard it ; Exod. vi. 9. " They hearkened not unto Moses, for anguish of spirit, and for cruel bondage." Frowardness does prejudice men against believing. When a man is in such a frame, he construes all God's dispensations to be from want of love. He thinks, if God had any love for him, he would never have dealt so with him ; if God had had a kindness for him, he would have done this for him and prevented this or that evil. But he takes it as a sign that God does not regard him ; when froward, he puts the worst sense upon every thing ; and represents God's dispensations to himself, as flowing from *want of love ;* he is ready to say, as she, " How canst thou say I love thee ?" Judges xv. 15. Yea, frowardness makes a man justify his unbelief ; it so blinds him, as it did *Jonah,* thot he thinks he does well ; and vindicates himself, as if he had cause for what he did.

2. Frowardness makes men *love to cavil against the encouragements that God sets before them.* A man in a froward frame studies *objections,* and indulges himself in a way of cavilling ; there is a great deal of *wilfulness* in their unbelief. A froward heart humours himself in his

raising

raising of objections; they take a pride in cavilling and turning off the calls of God. When the heart is discontented, there is a great deal of a sturdy spirit working in their unbelief. "If I had called, and he had answered, yet would I not believe that he did hearken unto my voice, for he breaketh me with a tempest, Job ix. 16, 17.

*Direct.* 3. *Set before yourselves the examples of other saints.* There is a cloud of witnesses gone before you; men that are under all sorts of difficulties and temptations have been exercising faith. Remember how "Abraham believed the Lord, and it was counted unto him for righteousness." How *Job* carried himself, when he says, "Though he slay me, yet I will trust in him." How *David* says, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul! hope in God." How *Jonah* recovers himself; "Yet will I look again toward thy holy temple." Such examples may be great inducements and helps to you to follow their example. These examples are very quickening and full of argument; they are very helpful to strengthen your faith, *several* ways.

1. The examples of saints recorded in Scripture, are *a warrant to you to believe.* Their faith is recorded to shew you what you should do, how you should carry in like cases. The examples of the faith of the saints are set down by way of *commendation*; they are presented before you as a *pattern* that you should walk after. The record of those examples does shew, that such a spirit and carriage is *highly approved* by God. You question whether or no God will not count it presumption in you to believe under such circumstances; but this may take

off

off that ; God has recorded it in his word, that his people have been wont to trust in him in such cases. And you are called upon by God to follow their example ; Heb. vi. 12. " Be followers of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promise."

2. *In these examples you may see what a lovely glorious thing it is to depend upon God, and be exercising of faith in difficult cases.* There is a great deal of the beauty and loveliness of grace seen in the exercise of it ; it is a taking thing to see those glorious workings of faith, that were in *Abraham, Sarah, Joseph, Moses,* and others of the *saints.* The apostle says, " We count them happy which eudure ;" Jam. v. 11. So we count them happy which *believe.* The rules of God's word carry in them a commendation of themselves ; but when we see them practised, they are very taking. We count the exercises of faith, that we hear of and read of, excellent ; and they stir us up to imitation.

3. *These examples of believing do provoke unto an holy emulation.* As one *scholar* is provoked to emulation by the *learning* of another, so is one *saint* provoked to emulation by the *faith* of others ; the examples of other mens faith have a tendency to make you ashamed of your unbelief ; you may be ashamed to see yourselves outstripped by those that lived in darker times than you do. You may be ashamed to think, that you are worse than others ; that you should be more backward to honour the grace and faithfulness of God than others.— These examples have a tendency to make you pluck up, that you may honour God as others have done.

*Direct.*

*Direct.* 6. *Labor to get your hearts fully satisfied in the divine authority of the Scriptures.* If men have scruples and misgivings of heart about that, they will be an occasion of discouragement: Such jealousies will interrupt the exercise of faith; for the word is the foundation of our faith; the authority of the word of God is our warrant to believe. Let all scruples of that kind be speedily removed, as things that strike at the very root of faith. See that you be well grounded in the authority of the word. Do not take it up as a tradition; as a thing owned by those among whom you live; but satisfy your hearts upon good ground, that the Scripture is no device of man, but the very word of God. And indeed God has given us as much assurance that it is his word, as we can reasonably desire and expect. He gives his own *testimony* to it. We receive the orders of authority upon their own testimony. Thus God witnesses to the truth of his word; he sets his hand to it; Zech. xii. 1. Rev. i. 1. And the Scripture has such *characters* in it, as evidence it to be the word of God. The word carries a sufficient evidence in itself; there are such *circumstances* and *marks* in it, as shew that it is not counterfeit. If a *prince* send an order to us, we know it is not counterfeit by the *seal*, the *secretary's* hand, the *style*, the *matter* of it: So here, all things are without exception. The things are such as are suitable to the glory of God. They were written by holy men that were God's messengers; they are delivered to us by his *church*: they are such things as no man without revelation could write; such things as no man dare write without order from God; such things as no bad man could write. And they are confirmed

confirmed by the *accomplishment of predictions*, and by the *presence of the Spirit*, blessing them unto conviction and conversion.

*Direct.* 7. *Lay up experiences both of the truth of God's word, and God's love to you.* First, lay up experiences of the *truth of God's word.* It is a great fault when persons do not treasure up remarkable experiences of the truth of those things that God teaches us in his word. Some men do not observe and take notice of such things. God does in his providence give abundance of experience of the truth of *threatenings*; they do many times come to pass in an eminent manner; he fulfils his word very plainly, that men may see that sin is a provoking thing, and a dangerous thing. So God is giving experience of the truth of *promises*: for a while the promise did not work, but afterwards it was remarkably accomplished. That *Joshua* takes notice of, Josh. xiii. 14. Sometimes he gives eminent experience of his *answering prayer*, 2 Sam. i. 27. Sometimes, of his making *a good end of afflictions*, Jam. v. 11.; and of the love he has to his people under their afflictions: so, Gen. xlv. 5. 2 Cor. iv. 18. Such things do much confirm our faith, that the word of God is certain and true; Rom. v. 4. "Experience works hope." Secondly, lay up experience of *his special love to you.* God gives his people experience of that in one degree or other. Lay up experiences of God's *converting* you, of the *manifestations* of his *favour*, the discoveries of his *glory*, his drawing forth the visible *actings of grace.* Such experiences as these may strengthen your faith; they are of great use to scatter and remove many temptations wherewith your faith may be assaulted. *Direct.* 8.

*Direct.* 8. *Get more spiritual acquaintance with God.* The spiritual knowledge of God is the foundation of all the practice of religion: we know him, and love him; we know him and obey him; we know him, and submit to him; we know him, and put our trust in him: Psal. ix. 10. "They that know thy name, will put their trust in thee." In this way men come to believe at first, and in this way their hearts come to be more settled in a way of believing. If men *understood* more what God is, that would deliver them from their doubtings; 2 Tim. i. 12. "I know whom I have believed." The more the soul sees of God, the more he is satisfied that it is safe venturing upon his word. When we understand what a *glorious, faithful* God the Lord is, we see that we have sure ground to go upon. And when we understand the *riches of God's grace*; that removes that great objection from our unworthiness, which made men think that God was not free to save them, and made them think he did not mean them in the invitations of the gospel. Therefore, make it your care to get as much *acquaintance* with God as you can; revive upon your hearts the remembrance of those *discoveries* that formerly God has given you; and be in the use of means to get new discoveries of the *glory of God*. Wait upon him to that end in the ways he has appointed, and exercise faith upon the Lord Jesus, as the great Prophet of his church, who bids us come to him, "that our eyes may be anointed with eye salve that we may see," Rev. iii. 18.

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